

THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

MILFORD H. LYON



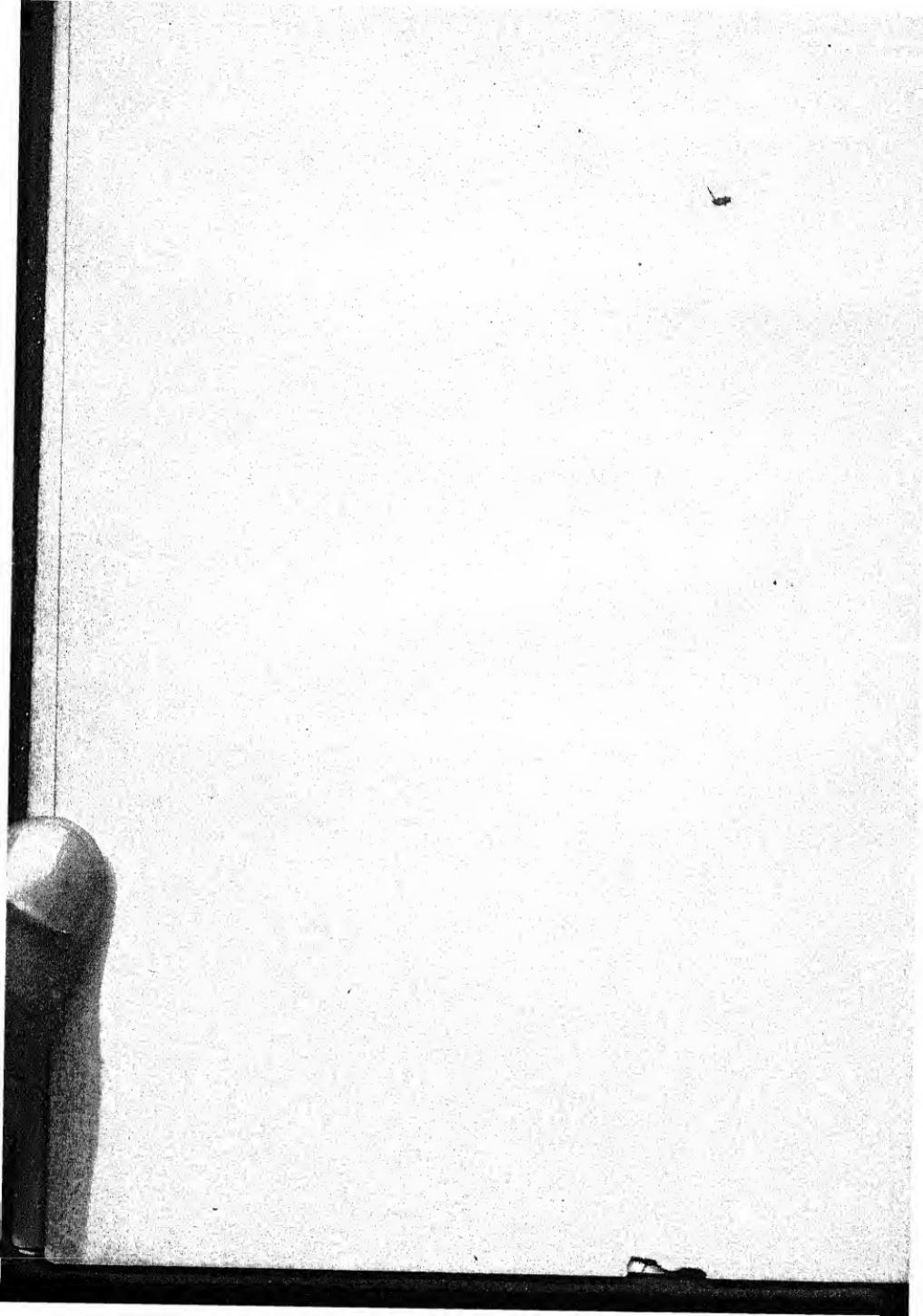
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TO THE
CHURCHES AND CHRISTIAN WORKERS
WITH WHOM IT HAS BEEN MY
PRIVILEGE, AS PASTOR AND EVANGELIST,
TO LABOR DURING MY
PUBLIC MINISTRY,
THIS VOLUME IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED



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PREFACE

Any treatment of so great a subject must, of necessity, be out of proportion to the theme. The author has not written to instruct the student of theology, so much as to help that larger company of earnest Christian disciples amid the problems and burdens of practical life. No claim is made that a new truth has been discovered. It is rather that an old one has been emphasized and applied. There is an abundance of potential energy in the religion of Christ, still undeveloped, to stir all Christendom to its depths, and to arouse men out of the spiritual lethargy into which so many have fallen.

Where quotations from Scripture have been made, the Revised Version has been used because it generally brings out more clearly the meaning of the original.

It has been with an earnest desire to do the Master's will that these chapters have been written. And they are sent forth with a prayer that they may help to advance His kingdom, and bring many souls into the life of full obedience to their divine Lord.

MILFORD H. LYON,
Wheaton, Illinois.



THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS

CHAPTER I

THE BASIS FOR A SPIRITUAL REVIVAL

Every great religious revival in the history of the Christian church has taken form about some central truth. This truth may have been long accepted, but never had received the consideration it deserved. Many a star may have flitted across the telescopic field of vision, but not until the astronomer has focused his lens upon that particular object does he determine its relative importance. Every great religious principle whose emphasis has stirred the church to its depths and transformed its life had previously been accepted, but needed to be brought into the foreground to exert a permanent and powerful influence upon religious thought and character.

Thus, the revival under Luther and his associates had as its basic principle justification by faith. The church had in a measure always believed this, yet when advocated and applied by the leaders of the Reformation, it seemed almost a discovery. Likewise, the great religious awakening under the Wesleys and Whitefield was not merely a protest against

the ritualism and sacerdotalism of the day, but was founded upon the principle of the work of the Holy Spirit in personal regeneration. Jonathan Edwards brought especially into prominence the message of the sovereignty of God. Finney emphasized the importance of personal responsibility and choice. And the central truth in the preaching of Mr. Moody was salvation by grace, the free and unmerited favor of God. In each case the principles previously established were not disregarded, but were used as the foundation upon which to add another story to the massive and enduring structure of religious truth and achievement.

The revelation to each generation is supplementary, not substitutional. The Wesleys accepted the doctrine of justification, Finney of regeneration, and Moody of divine sovereignty. Spiritual riches come not by discarding the past, but by adding to the treasures already accumulated. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a householder who brought forth out of his treasures things both new and old."

We are now led to inquire what shall be the character of the next great spiritual awakening. If it is to follow in the path of history, can we not expect that it also shall form about a central truth which shall be, not only a basis for the structure, but also a mainspring giving energy to the entire movement?

Such a principle to become the dynamics of a great religious revival must be a truth of the mightiest import. It need not attract by any claim to novelty. It may be rather some belief that has

been already at least partially accepted, but has not been generally assimilated and had its latent potentiality applied to life and experience. And when we stop to consider that all of the great discoveries in the material world have been the application of principles and powers of simple character and of common observation, can we not expect an analogy in the realm of religion?

Any great principle to be worthy of giving direction to a great spiritual movement must satisfy many varied and strict requirements. First, it must be scriptural. Any idea advanced that does not commend itself to Christian thinkers and workers as having unquestioned authority in the Word of God cannot with reason expect their acceptance and support.

Second, such a principle must be comprehensive in its character, comprehensive in its scope of vision, and also in its application to all classes and conditions of humanity. In our day, more than ever before, any idea that is evidently limited in its grasp of truth cannot command any general interest. The power of Christianity has been its universality, and its adaptability to all the varied needs and problems of human life and experience; and any religious principle, to receive the hearty support of Christian thinkers, must be universal enough to reach all grades and elements in society.

Again, this principle must be unifying. Many religious ideas in our day have been advanced that have tended to divide, rather than unite, Christian

believers. Christ is not divided; the Holy Spirit does not teach one thing to one, and the opposite to another. Anything that tends to produce schism cannot surely meet the divine approval. If a religious awakening does not tend to unify the disciples of Jesus, its ultimate result is disastrous rather than beneficial.

And, lastly, this principle must be effective in producing a higher type of religious thought and character. It must be applicable to present-day conditions and needs, and when so applied must tend to a radical transformation in the life of its adherents.

What principle can satisfy all these religious tests? Do we not have it in the Lordship of Jesus? The church has always accepted—at least superficially—the truth of this principle, yet never has it been brought into the foreground of the field of vision. Even the Jews looked upon the coming Messiah as a king, but the lordship was to be political rather than personal, the sovereignty of an earthly throne, rather than the dominant power in the direction of individual and social thought and activity. Every generation of the Christian church has assigned to Jesus the title of Lord. It has been incorporated in its creeds, its hymns, its sermons, and its prayers. But too often the practical authority has been transferred to His future reign, rather than to be made dominant in present conditions. In the contemplation of His great sacrifice and death, many have seemed to forget that He lives and reigns. The ob-

ject of this work is to emphasize the pregnant truth that we should acknowledge Jesus not only as our Saviour from the guilt of sin, but also as Lord of the entire activity of life.

CHAPTER II

THE CONCURRENT TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE

Let us note at this point how thoroughly scriptural is the principle of the Lordship of Jesus. The frequency and directness with which the Old Testament speaks of Jesus as King was, in itself, one cause of the misconception of the Jews, and of their rejection of the Christ. But their mistake was not in the interpretation of Scripture, it was in their idea of kingship. They could not disassociate from their conception of royalty, the thought of material wealth and dominion, of rich apparel and gorgeous display. They read rightly when they expected the Messiah to be a king, but, with the veil upon their hearts, they failed to see that he who was to be truly great should be the servant of all, that true regality consisted in kingliness of character.

A few Messianic passages will be sufficient to show clearly the prophetic conception of the character and office of Christ.

Genesis 49:10—"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the obedience of the peoples be."

Isaiah 9:6-7—"For unto us a child is born, unto

us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from henceforth even forever."

Psalm 110: 1—"Jehovah saith unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool."

Jesus Himself referred to this passage in His conflict with the Pharisees, related in Matt. 22: 41-46. They could not understand this Scripture, for the key to its interpretation rested in the acceptance and acknowledgment of Jesus as that Lord of which the Psalmist wrote. Failing in this, no one of them was able to answer Him a word.

Micah 5: 2—"But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, which art little to be among the thousands of Judah, out of thee shall one come forth unto me that is to be a ruler in Israel; whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting."

Mal. 3: 1—"Behold, I send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, will suddenly come to his temple."

Daniel 7: 14—"And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all the peoples, nations and languages should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed."

The Messianic prophecies so clearly point to the Kingship of the coming Christ, that it is not strange that the Jews failed to see in the gentle and loving Jesus qualities so opposite and in such strange contrast to all of their ideas of lordship and mastery. They had not grasped the greater conception of "the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne." As Jesus Himself gave as the true basis of royalty, "Whosoever would be first among you shall be your servant." The Jews will never have the veil removed from their hearts until they read many of their Messianic prophecies in the light of the Lordship of Jesus. While passages such as Isaiah 53 foretell His office as Saviour, more foretell fully His office as King. Truly, they must learn that genuine royalty is not a matter of throne and crown and sceptre, but of gentleness and love and service.

If the Old Testament prophecy is explicit in its reference to the Lordship of the coming Christ, still more so is the prophecy, the biography, and the history of the New Testament. In Matt. 3:3, John the Baptist bears witness to the kingly office of Jesus: "Make ye ready the way of the Lord." The angels also, on His birth night, Luke 2:11: "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord."

Thomas, when he beholds the risen Christ, exclaims in the enthusiasm of his newly-established faith, "My Lord and my God." This utterance might well be said to be the typical testimony of a converted life. Like the exclamation of Mary under

similar conditions, "Rabboni!" "My Master," it marks the spirit of the soul that has entered within the portals of the Kingdom of our Lord.

Peter clearly indicates his comprehension of the Lordship of Jesus. With this truth he closes his sermon at Pentecost (Acts 2: 34-36). After quoting from Psalm 110, which Jesus had also used, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet," he ends his message with these words: "Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly that God hath made him both Lord and Christ whom ye crucified." It was this that convicted the Jews of sin. "Now when they heard this they were pricked in their hearts." Also in his sermon in the house of Cornelius, Peter declares the same truth: Acts 10: 36, "Preaching good tidings of peace by Jesus Christ (he is Lord of all)." Then, in 2 Peter 1: 11, he speaks of "entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In the one case he speaks of Jesus as Lord and Christ; and in the other, as Lord and Saviour.

Paul uses the term "Lord" generally, in speaking of Jesus; but the three-fold title, "Lord Jesus Christ," is frequently employed. Each name has its peculiar significance. "Jesus" refers to His Saviourship (Matt. 1: 21): "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; for it is he that shall save his people from their sins." "Christ" refers to His Messiahship; while "Lord," His foremost title, refers to His Mastership or Kingship.

In 1 Cor. 15:31, Paul speaks of Christ Jesus our Lord. And in 1 Tim. 6:15, he affirms this as a present fact, and not as some seem to think, that this Kingship of Jesus is entirely a matter of a future dispensation; for he says, speaking of Jesus, "who *is*"—not who shall be. "Who *is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords." Again, in 2 Cor. 4:5, Paul states that the Lordship of Jesus is the basis of his preaching: "For we preach not ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord."

Furthermore, Jesus Himself uses the title of Lord in referring to His own office. When the Pharisees endeavor to regulate His life, He declares that the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath. In John 13:13, He says: "Ye call me Master, and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." And in the next verse He adds the definite article, "I then, the Lord and the Master," claiming for Himself absolute sovereignty. Also, in John 18:37, in reply to Pilate's question, "Art thou a King then?" Jesus answers, "Thou sayest it, for I am a King." And finally, in Revelation 17:14, "For he is Lord of lords and King of kings."

These are but a few of the Scripture passages especially referring to the Lordship of Jesus. Many more will suggest themselves to every student of the Bible. But enough have been quoted to show how this great teaching permeates the entire book, and is founded solidly upon the Word of God.

CHAPTER III

THE SOURCE OF LIFE

Let us now proceed to consider the comprehensiveness of Christ's Lordship. John 14: 6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." Here we have Jesus stating His threefold Lordship, declaring Himself to be the source of spiritual direction, of spiritual instruction, and of spiritual vitality. No claim could be more all-embracing than this. It covers the entire realm of the spiritual nature, including birth, growth, and activity. Let us consider these divisions in their reverse order.

First, Christ as the one source of spiritual life, as Paul states it in Colossians 3: 4, "Christ, our life." This life, John also speaks of in the first chapter and fourth verse of his Gospel. "In him was life," is evidently not physical or intellectual life, merely, for in his Epistle he says, "He that hath the Son of God hath the life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not the life." Before receiving Him they have physical and mental vitality, hence the apostle must refer to the spiritual life. Note he uses here the definite article, which the Revised Version adds, as it is in the original text, "hath *the* life"; all other life, in comparison with the spiritual, being so temporary as not to be entitled to the term.

Jesus had Himself declared (John 10:10), "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Here, again, the Revised Version keeps close to the original meaning; "abundantly," not "more abundantly." If without Jesus there could be spiritual life, He would not have defined the impartation of life as the purpose of His advent. "The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45). There can be no lasting vitality to the soul apart from Jesus, and without spiritual life there can be neither development nor service.

The simple illustration of the vine and branches was used by the Master to show the absolute dependence upon Him for spiritual existence. "Apart from me ye can do nothing." The life of the spirit comes, then, not by any system of study or culture. It is only through the assimilation of the very personality of the Christ. This is the meaning of Paul, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Upon this foundation alone does he base his spiritual existence. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." And his desire that this same experience should come into the natures of his friends in Galatia, is so great that he writes to them, "My little children, of whom I am again in travail until Christ be formed in you." This is the leaven which must be hid in the meal until the entire character is vitalized.

This essentiality of life is fundamental. The teacher is of more importance than the text-book. Imparting the spirit of learning is far more valuable

than the facts of learning, for without the spirit the facts are futile. Educationalism cannot take the place of evangelism, nor culture of conversion. While the soul is dead in trespasses and sin, it needs something more than reformation. It needs regeneration.

A sculptor toiled for weeks to express his ideal of a perfect human form. When he had completed his work he invited a friend to come and behold his achievement. "What do you think of it?" he proudly asked his friend. "It yet lacks one thing," was the reply. "What is that?" inquired the artist, with some disappointment, as he had thought his work beyond criticism. "Life," was the answer.

Jesus is Lord of life. Religion is relationship, it is the vital contact of the personal soul with the personal Lord. More and more, the world is realizing that Christianity is Christ. This is the reason why the philosophic Paul determined to know nothing among the Corinthians but Christ. He embraces the entire domain of spiritual existence. When one ascends to the Mount of Transfiguration, and the clouds have rolled away, he sees Jesus only. It is to Him alone we must look for the one spiritual source of birth, growth, and maturity. He is the one authority in the biology of the soul. It is upon His life that we must depend for imparting to us life. "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Rom. 5:10). By His death the debt was paid, the obstructions removed;

but by His life do we receive the spiritual vitality to live and grow.

Here is the great lesson of the bread chapter, the sixth of John. The assimilation of Jesus must precede the imitation of Jesus. His life must be impressed before it can be expressed. You cannot follow Jesus until you are filled with Jesus. To be real and regnant, the kingdom of God must be within you. The seat of His throne is in the human heart. The great need of the church, and of society in general, is regenerated men, men alive in Christ, or, better, Christ alive in them.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUPREME AUTHORITY FOR INSTRUCTION

The title of Master is literally Teacher. Christ claimed not simply to teach the truth, but also to be the truth, the word made flesh. Pilate asked, "What is truth?" Jesus had already given the answer. "I am the truth."

In these days many are saying, "Truth for authority, not authority for truth." It is true that authority does not create truth; it only identifies it. The government by its stamp does not create the gold, yet it does indicate its value. But, more than this, Jesus is at the same time the source of truth, and truth is to be gauged and identified by His teachings. Somewhere in spiritual instruction there must be authority. Ecclesiasticism has located that authority in the church; Christianity sees it alone in Jesus.

If, in law, a case could be appealed from the county court to the district court, and then to the appellate court, and again taken back to the county court, there would be no end to litigation. Christ is the supreme tribunal, the court of last resort, in the realm of the spirit.

An engineer might take never so much time in making soundings, but, before he could begin to build the buttresses for a bridge, he must strike solid

rock somewhere. Upon the rock, Christ Jesus, is built the structure of our spiritual faith. All other foundations must be as unstable and disastrous as the shifting sand.

In these days there is so much human opinion in religious beliefs. This was one of the especial grounds of Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees. He quoted first from Isaiah, "In vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men." And then the Saviour adds, "Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men" (Mark 7: 7-8).

The application of this principle would revolutionize much of our modern preaching. The text is too often simply a point of departure. If every sermon were to be gauged in its preparation by the teachings of Jesus, and delivered as if He were a member of the audience, how much, often, would have to be added, and how much eliminated!

Many of the utterances of Christ are still not regarded as authoritative. A great many base their religious belief upon the authenticity of the Gospels rather than upon their authority. There is a blighting infidelity extant that makes many of the teachings of Jesus something to be admired, rather than to be applied; the beautiful utterances of impractical philosophy, rather than the supreme expression of divine wisdom. He that acknowledges Jesus as Lord of spiritual learning will not simply take His words as true; but, furthermore, will believe them to be the most important and practical messages that

an all-wise and all-loving Creator had to impart to humanity.

And, further, the authority of the teachings of Jesus may reasonably be considered as extending also to the words to which He gave His sanction. It is a principle in law that a master is responsible for the acts of his agent; and most certainly would it establish beyond question that responsibility if the principal gave the act his approval. The author who quotes certain words in support of his principles thereby gives them the same endorsement as if they were his own. So the authoritative teachings of Jesus may rightfully be said to include all the messages to which he gave His endorsement.

He said to the Jews, "Ye search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me." From Deuteronomy He thrice chose words to repel in the wilderness the assaults of Satan. On the walk to Emmaus, "Beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." He quoted also from David, Jonah, Isaiah, and Daniel. If we believe in the authority of the teachings of Jesus, we cannot doubt that they were intended, not simply for the people to whom they were spoken, but for every nation and people throughout the generations.

The writers of the New Testament unanimously ascribe their authority to Jesus. Matthew begins his Gospel as, "The Book of the Generation of Jesus Christ"; Mark, "The Beginning of the Gospel of

Jesus Christ." Luke, at the opening of the Acts, speaks of his writings as a treatise on what "Jesus began both to do and to teach." And John says his words are "that which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of Life."

Jesus had promised His disciples that the Holy Spirit would bring to their remembrance all that He had said unto them. Hence, in the Epistles as well as in the Gospels, we have through the Spirit the message of the personal Christ. Paul states as his authority, "For neither did I receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came to me through revelation of Jesus Christ." The author of Hebrews states, at the opening, that, "God at the end of these days hath spoken unto us in his Son." Being so hidden in the Lord, he deems it of no importance to mention his own name. James and Jude begin their Epistles as "bond-servants of Jesus Christ." And the closing book, commonly called the Revelation of John, distinctly states at the outset that it is "the Revelation of Jesus Christ." Thus the Lordship of Jesus extends to the entire realm of Scripture.

It is in this Word that we must trust for direction as to our salvation. Christ's Word abiding in us is one of the requisites for effective prayer. Lacking Scriptural authority, the Christian worker would be like a sailor struggling with wind and wave, without helm or oar, rudder or sail. It would be like striv-

ing to save a drowning man when your own craft was gradually sinking into the sea. "The words I have spoken unto you," said Jesus, "are spirit, and are life" (John 6:63). He gave the strongest possible promise to the life that obeyed His instruction. "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you." Let us sit, then, like Mary, at the feet of the Supreme Teacher; and be assured of the divine commendation, that we have chosen "the good part, which shall not be taken away."

CHAPTER V

THE GUIDE OF ACTION

Now we are to consider the Master not only as the only rightful Lord of spiritual life and instruction, but also of conduct. Paul states that the object of Christ's death and resurrection was the establishment of His Lordship. Romans 14:9, "For to this end Christ died and lived again, that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living."

While Jesus had clearly proclaimed this truth, it was left to the apostles to bring it forth even more fully. Christ had told His disciples that He had yet many things to say unto them, but they could not bear them now. But He promised that the Holy Spirit should guide them into all the truth, and His mission should be to glorify Christ. What way could the Spirit so well honor Jesus, as to establish in the hearts of humanity the great truth of His Lordship? "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

It was fulfilling the prophecy of Jesus that, under the instruction and inspiration of the Spirit, the apostles in their Epistles developed this great truth of the Kingship of Christ. Paul makes the acknowl-

edgment of Jesus as Lord one of the distinct indications of the presence and possession of the Spirit. 1 Cor. 12:3, "No man can say, Jesus is Lord, but in the Holy Spirit." Peter also, 1 Peter 3:15, "Sanctify in your hearts Jesus as Lord." In the inculcation then of this great principle, we are carrying forward the work that the divine Spirit is endeavoring to accomplish in the world.

But still further than this, the apostle to the Gentiles makes the acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus a requisite for salvation itself. Here, the translation of the Revised Version brings out more exactly the meaning of the original (Romans 10:9). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth *Jesus as Lord*, and shalt believe in thy heart that God raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."

Jude in the fourth verse of his Epistle gives the denial of our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ, as the basis of the condemnation of the ungodly. There was a deeper significance in the title on the cross than the Roman governor realized: written in Greek, the symbol of culture; in Latin, the symbol of activity; and in Hebrew, the symbol of spirituality, it proclaimed Jesus as King. He is Lord of the intellect, Lord of action, Lord of worship.

The great truth of the kingdom of God has an intimate connection with the Kingship of Jesus. The Gospels speak very little of heaven, by that term. Jesus used often the term, "kingdom of heaven," or its synonym, "the kingdom of God"; and of the saved, "children of the kingdom."

Paul, in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians, says that the kingdom of God is for us the kingdom of Christ. And in the letter to the Colossians, he gives thanks unto the Father that they have been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of his Son (Col. 1:13). Salvation is entrance into the kingdom of heaven. It is evident we cannot enter this kingdom without taking the King of this kingdom as our King. If citizenship in an earthly kingdom can be gained by no easier method, surely it cannot in the heavenly.

But many professed Christians have never conceived the authority of a living Christ over their lives to be an essential part of religion. They have beheld Jesus as a Saviour from death, but have not regarded him also as Lord of the life. They have not seemed to comprehend the truth that obedience is the key that unlocks the gates of heaven.

By no means must we lose sight of the great truth of the atonement; that "Christ also suffered for sins once, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Yet, he who stops with the Saviourship of Jesus, and fails to comprehend His Lordship, is limiting his conception of the office and mission of Jesus, and losing a great factor in the finished work of salvation. For these truths are supplementary the one to the other. It is essential to see Jesus as the all-sufficient sacrifice for sin, in order that He may become also the Leader and Controller of our entire life. Without consciousness of divine forgiveness for past trans-

gressions, what incentive would there be to press forward to the high calling in Christ for the future? If a bankrupt has not assurance of liberation from the unbearable load of his past debts, he can muster no courage to strive for a credit and competency in the years to come.

And on the other hand, what evidence that the bankrupt will not continue in his downward career? The fact that he changes his leadership, and places himself under the authority of one who will henceforth guide him into plans and policies which will transform and regulate aright his entire activity. Otherwise, the payment of his debts would be useless, and must be continually repeated with no visible benefit to the recipient. A new element must enter the life, a changed attitude of mind, and disposition of heart, testifying that the old life of self has been abandoned, and the character has been established upon the rock. It is upon this definite acceptance of the Lordship of Jesus that the heavenly Father can place dependence upon our becoming meet to be partakers of the eternal inheritance.

At the opening of Jesus' ministry He taught the general truth of the sovereignty of God, a truth that needs to be emphasized in our day. He did not say it was wrong to serve God and mammon, or that we ought not to serve both. What He said was, "Ye cannot." It is not wrong, it is an impossibility. This was not a new revelation; it was only the restatement of the First Commandment, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." Every life must

have some controlling motive and incentive. "Know ye not, that to whom ye present yourselves as servants unto obedience, his servants ye are whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Unless we crown Him Lord of all, we really do not crown Him Lord at all.

It was not until later in His ministry, that His disciples were ready for the great truth, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." They were exceedingly slow to grasp the fact, that to Jesus all power had been given in heaven and upon the earth; that the great Jehovah, who had been revealed to Moses in the burning bush, to Ezekiel by the river Chebar, and to Elijah in the still, small voice, was present with them in the flesh, in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Near the close of His ministry the Master clearly announced His Lordship. By His life of loving service, He had won their hearts, then He lays down the test of love,—obedience. "If ye love me ye will keep my commandments."

Jesus never made the conditions for discipleship easy. He wanted each one to count the cost. "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." It is indeed a serious thing to let Jesus into the heart. He will want to abide. He will want the key to every room. You can no longer say your life is your own. His by creation and by redemption, in the acknowledgment of His ownership, you gain the eternal citizenship and inheritance of heaven.



CHAPTER VI

THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY

Matthew 23:8-10, "For one is your teacher, and all ye are brethren. . . . Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ." In these words, Jesus declares that the basis of human brotherhood is found in the acknowledgment of His divine authority. No other plan, throughout the centuries, has been devised by which diversified human life can be brought together into an organic unity.

Men differ in their tastes, their ambitions, their ideas and desires. If you should make, as the basis of unity, instruction in science, you might interest and unite the scientists. If you dealt with art, you might gain the attention of the artists. If you made, as the bond of union, mechanics, you might interest the machinists; agriculture would bring together the farmers; or commerce and finance, the merchants and bankers. But the scientist would not be attracted by the principles of commerce, nor the machinist by science, nor the artist by agriculture. Only one basis has ever been discovered that will result in the unification of all human life. "For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

This unity in Jesus is produced not so much by

the emphasis of His Saviourship or His Messiahship, as by the emphasis and acceptance of His Lordship. "For the death that he died, he died unto sin once: but the life that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Romans 6: 10). In a limited sense, at least, Jesus became our Saviour by his sacrificial death on the cross. By this act, He died once for all; and by the acceptance of that atonement, the debt is paid and our sin is blotted out. While in like manner the acceptance of Jesus as Lord might be said to be a single, definite act; yet in a greater sense, it is continuous and progressive. Jesus, as Saviour, died for sin once; but Jesus, as Lord, lives and reigns forever. "We were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, shall we be saved by his life" (Romans 5: 10). I hold, then, that the basis of Christian unity, specifically, shall be in the emphasis of His Lordship rather than in His Saviourship. Not but that both of these truths are vital and essential; yet the fact of Lordship deals more especially with the future, as that of Saviourship deals with the past.

Unity in diversity is a universal principle. To take elements different by nature and bring them into harmonious relation with each other seems to be the specific object of divine law. The ray of sunlight though so perfect a unit, yet, when dissolved by the spectrum of the falling shower, shows itself in the rainbow to be a combination of many varied hues. The orbits of the planets, which are seemingly marked with such definiteness and precision, are

found to be the resultant of two diametrically different forces; the centrifugal and centripetal. Music is the blending together of wholly different strains. Society is the union of many unlike elements. And the individual man, himself, is the composite of a mass of material and spiritual substance, diversified in its nature, yet unified into a being of matchless wonder.

Dissimilarity, not similarity, is the rule of every department of life. No two objects are alike. The birds singing in the branches, though issuing from the same nest; the leaves of a tree; or the pebbles on the strand, all differ one from the other. God seems to delight in dissimilarity. Science shows that the greater the perfection of any species, the greater the differentiation from the original form. "There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory." No two minds are alike, either in their desires, their talents, or their capacities. Were it not for this difference in characters, all human life might have been centered in a single soul.

Dissimilarity, then, is intended not as a curse, but as a blessing. One man we find by nature a scientist, another a machinist, another an artist, another a merchant. Specialization is the trend of every phase of the world's economy. No one can say his life work is of more, or of less, importance than that of another, if each is doing the will of God. This division of labor has brought greater

interdependence upon the members of every community. Each is essential to supply the other's needs. "The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of thee: or again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. . . And whether one member suffereth, all the members suffer with it; or one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it."

This value of diversity is just as manifest in the spiritual world as in the economic. Some lament that there is not more sameness among Christian people. A granting of this desire would mean a return to the dearth and darkness of the Middle Ages. It is evident that what is needed in the church of Christ is not greater uniformity but greater unity. Just as a difference of vocations necessitates greater dependence among the members of society upon one another, each member supplying what some other lacks, so in the federation of Christian workers, diversity of training, of desires, of choice, and of talents is one of God's wise agencies for the production of the greatest strength and unity.

When Jehovah spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He declared Himself the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. Of Abraham, whose very name signified authority and power; of Isaac, the meek and gentle husbandman; of Jacob, the cunning and designing supplanter. God is the Creator of all; and each type of character, if willing to do His will and enter His service, He can make of special use and value to every other.

To unify all of these diverse elements of character into one harmonious organism is the great mission of Christ. "He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet" (1 Cor. 15: 25). "For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or on earth; as there are gods many, and lords many; yet to us there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we unto him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and we through him" (1 Cor. 8: 5-6).

In that fervent prayer after instituting the Communion, this seemed the uppermost desire of Christ: that His disciples all might be one, that the world might know that the Father had sent Him. Division induces weakness, and one great hindrance to spiritual effectiveness to-day is the strife and schism among Christian believers.

It is said that, during the Napoleonic wars, one night a battleship sighted what she supposed to be a ship of the enemy; and drawing near, she opened fire. The volley was returned and all night long the decks were strewn with the bodies and stained with the blood of the sailors. The masts were shattered, both vessels were almost entirely disabled, and a large part of the crews were killed. When morning dawned, to the great surprise of the survivors, both ships were found to be floating the British flag. Methinks the great sorrow that is burdening and well nigh breaking the heart of Jesus, reënacting the scenes of Gethsemane's suffering, is the discord and dissension among His professed disciples.

Christ evidently does not desire His followers to be alike, to do alike, and to think alike. In His chosen band of apostles, He seems to have aimed to bring together all of the radically different types of character. There was the rash and impulsive Peter; the plain and unpretentious Jude; the practical and commercial Matthew; the sceptical and materialistic Thomas; the guileless Nathanael; the personal workers, Andrew and Philip; the precise and upright James; the loving John; and even the crafty and penurious Judas. Each of these types, if brought into harmony and obedience to his divine Lord, could contribute an element of strength and value essential for the greatest results. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ."

Not only did Jesus pray to the Father they might all be one, but He taught them the true basis of brotherhood, "One is your Master, and all ye are brethren." That is, the Mastership of Jesus must precede the brotherhood of humanity. All other fraternities are simply ropes of sand. A brotherhood founded upon the basis of self-interest can continue only just so long as the individual can use that bond for the furtherance of his own ends.

When the Children of Israel, after the unstable rule of the Judges, petitioned Samuel for a king, they revealed a natural desire of mankind. Stability in society is gained only through government, and unity is secured only through the acknowledgment of

authority. When every man does that which is right in his own eyes, the anarchy of the closing years of the Judges is the result. When every man does that which is right in the eyes of the only Lord, there is manifest the peace and permanence and happiness of the eternal kingdom.

All through the centuries of the Christian era, the importance of unity has been recognized, but many elements of belief have been emphasized as essentials upon which it was impossible to unify the body of Christ. Jesus Himself laid down the basic principle upon which His church should be built: the confession of Him as the Son—not *a* son, but *the* Son—of the living God. With this as a basis, the forces of evil have no power to prevail against His church. The tendency of humanity is toward separation. There is needed some great controlling power to counteract this dissipating influence. We find it in the truth of Jesus as Lord and Master. Just as the spokes of the wheel approach the hub, or the planets approach the sun, they approach one another; so in proportion as our wills are lost in the will of Christ, we breathe into His prayer the breath of life: "That they all may be one."

CHAPTER VI

THE WILL OF GOD

Matthew 7:21, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven."

In these words, Jesus warns His disciples against any superficial conception of His Lordship. It must be in reality and not in seeming profession. Every great life is characterized by a willingness to do God's will. Every stream that has blessed and beautified human life has had its source in the fountain of obedience to God; every stream that has poisoned, polluted, and blighted human life has had its source in disobedience to God.

Jesus began His plea for obedience by exhorting His hearers to loyalty to the will of His Father. He then proceeded to teach them that He and the Father are one, and he that had seen Him had also seen the Father. Scientific instruction always endeavors to connect the knowledge to be imparted with something already learned. At the beginning of His ministry, His disciples acknowledged, theoretically at least, the authority of the Father. Starting with this as a basis, Jesus desires to make this acceptance of divine authority more than mere Pharisaism and

formalism. It was far easier for them to profess allegiance to the Jehovah who in times past had manifested Himself to His servants and prophets by voice or vision, than it was practically to receive and obey this same Jehovah in the person of His Son. The coming of Jesus was to bring religious profession to an issue. Men were either to do the will of God as it was now declared unto them, or by refusing, they would close the door of the divine kingdom against themselves. Their religion was to be a structure built upon the rock or on the sand, and whether they should accept or should reject the Master's words would determine it.

Much of the failure to do God's will is due to indecision rather than to disobedience. Religion is positive rather than negative, it consists in doing right rather than in not doing wrong. Neglect rather than antagonism is the great sin of our day. To acknowledge definite allegiance to Christ requires energy on the part of the will. Yielding your will to God's will is not a destruction of your will, but it is its exercise in the highest and broadest channel. Discipline consists, not in breaking the will, but in developing and directing it. Doing the word of Christ implies action. "Thy will be done on earth," be done by whom? By you, by me. The same propensity that would produce a failure in religion would also make a failure of any and every other line of activity; namely, indecision of character.

If you should liken the life to a locomotive, you might liken the intellect to the machinery, the

memory to the fuel in the tender, and the emotions to the fire beneath the boiler. But it is the will, who is the engineer in the cab, with his hand upon the lever and the throttle, who will speed the train to its destination, or leave it to back down grade into the ditch.

No man, by a process of reasoning, can think himself into the kingdom of heaven. The journey to salvation might be likened to a trip to Europe; intellect like the railway could take you to the coast, but you must then take the definite step from the railway train to the steamship before you could complete your journey. True, you might take a trip on the cars, up and down the coast, but that would not get you across the ocean. So no process of thinking, simply, will produce the result of conversion. There must be brought into operation the agency of the will. When the Spirit through your conscience shows you what you ought to do, God can do no more for you until with His grace you are willing to do it.

There are, indeed, two general types of character: one may be called the commercial type, the other the judicial. The banker, for example, is called upon to make many decisions on the spot. The judge, on the other hand, weighs and considers each case with careful deliberation. Yet there is this point of likeness between them: in each instance when the individual is certain what is the right thing to do, he does it. That is, if he is a true man. No one could be successful in business who took any other course.

This element of decision of character is always evident in a strong life. Many that have great qualities of intellect are forceless and ineffectual on account of the failure of the will. They are ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. With them,

“The native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.”

This apathy and indecision is nowhere so disastrous in its effects as in the domain of the spirit. Every soul that has been great for God, having seen its duty, has done it. Throughout the Scripture every character that flashes and flames far out amidst the darkness like a beacon light has been denoted by this quality. Abram, when he was called to go unto a place that he was to receive for an inheritance, obeyed, not knowing whither he went. Moses, called to go up in the presence of Egypt’s absolute monarch, obeyed. Elijah, commanded to go into hiding by the brook Cherith, went and did according unto the word of the Lord. John and Andrew and Matthew heard the voice of Jesus and followed Him. These were all men of decision. “Whosoever shall do the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother and sister and mother.”

Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road, saw clearly what he ought to do. It would require him to be

absolutely contrary to what he had been. But he did just what any true life must do. He got down from his pride, his prejudice, his rebellion, and answered, "Lord, what shall I do?" It is this definite surrender to Christ that heralds the dawning of a new life within his soul.

Every genuine character must be willing to submit to this great law of progress: to do what you know to be right to-day, even if it is absolutely contrary to everything you ever have done. To you, the risen Lord is now manifesting Himself, claiming your unhesitating and unqualified allegiance. This is the will of the Father, that you believe on Him whom He hath sent. God grant that you may be able to say with Paul, "I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision."

We are now led to consider what are the results that follow the doing of the will of God. First, there comes spiritual knowledge. But some will say, How am I to know what God's will for my life is? or, If I knew certainly just what the Lord wanted me to do, I would say very quickly whether or not I would do it. But you will never know what the Lord wants you to do until first you yield your life to do His will. It is not knowledge first, and obedience afterwards; it is obedience first, and knowledge afterwards.

A colonel of a regiment does not give directions to everyone in the community, but only to the special body of men who have sworn allegiance to the commander, and promised obedience to his

orders. Then he tells them what he wants them to do. So Jesus says, "If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching." Here comes in the importance and necessity of faith as a prerequisite for obedience. It is not until a man has complete confidence in Christ, that he is willing to abandon his life and destiny wholly into His hands.

It might be interposed that Christ Himself taught that it was the will of God, the Father, that they were to do. But He went on to teach that the will of the Father was that they should believe on His Son. That he who had seen the Son had seen the Father also. Doing the will of God, then, is the will of both the Father and the Son. To us the will of the Father is, in an especial sense the will of Christ, for through the Son is our only avenue of knowing the Father. God in Christ is a definite personality to us, One who took upon Himself our nature. And in His life, His teachings, His works, and His death, we have the revelation of the Father's will.

As He went forward in His ministry He unfolded further the great truth of His oneness with the Father; so that at last, near the close, He could make the declaration (John 14: 23), "If a man love me, he will keep my word: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Again, (John 15: 10), "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love." Also, (John 15: 14), "Ye are my friends, if ye do the things which I command you." And, (John

5: 22-23), "For neither doth the Father judge any man, but he hath given all judgment unto the Son; that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He that honoreth not the Son, honoreth not the Father who sent him." Christ said further, that they who reject Him reject the Father who sent Him. Since all power has been given unto Him, both in heaven and in earth, the essence of doing the will of the heavenly Father is in the acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the Son.

In the next place, obedience to the will of God is essential for practical effectiveness. We can liken the universe to a great business corporation with Jesus as the great General Manager. Every employer of men will agree that an employee is valuable, not simply in proportion to his ability, but even more according to his willingness to do the will of his employer. When any business man can get an assistant who will take as much interest in his business as he himself does, he doubles his own effectiveness. No better rule can be given to young men starting out in business than this: Find out what your employer wants you to do, and then do it. In like manner, no better rule for spiritual effectiveness can be given than this: Find out what Jesus Christ, your Lord, wants you to do, and then do it.

Many are willing to do the work of God that are not willing to do the will of God. It is as if the manager of a great firm should say some morning to his stenographer, "I am going out for an hour, you sit down and wait until I return." But after he is

gone, the secretary says, "I must earn my wages, I must be at work."—Sometimes, it is harder to wait than it is to work. "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength."—So she goes to work and writes letters to many correspondents, according to her own ideas, without directions from her employer. After a time replies to these letters begin to come in. She did the work of her employer but did not do his will. She probably did far more harm than good.

Or, it would be as if you were erecting a great building and employing scores of workmen, and a strange man should come some morning with his hammer and trowel and start to work. He would not consult you, the owner, neither the architect, who had planned and was supervising the construction. The new workman would conclude, in one place, to put in a window; in another, to build the wall solid. At the close of the day, he comes around for his pay. You say to him, "Who are you?" "Why, I have been working upon this building." "Who employed you and gave you directions?" "No one. I have been directing myself." "What have you done?" "Well, I built a solid wall there." "But I intended to have a door there." "Well, I have put in a window over here." "But I did not want a window here. You have done far more injury than you have benefit. In place of giving you any pay, I should much better sue you for damages."

So in the church there are many people who will work for the church organization. They will help to

build a new building, to buy pulpit furniture, to get new carpets, or to raise debts. They will help to get up bazaars and suppers and shows, taking part, as it were, in the cooking-stove apostacy of modern religion, and sometimes turning the church into a second class restaurant or theater. They are good people in many ways; they will work hard; in fact, they will do anything but be religious. Many in these days are mistaking perspiration for inspiration. It is not work, work, work; but will, will, will, that is the key to spiritual success.

The cause of the effectiveness and exaltation of Jesus was not, solely, that he was born of the virgin Mary overshadowed by the Holy Spirit. This might have happened and yet He could have failed to gain the crown. He Himself reveals the secret of His favor with the Father: "I am come down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me."

In the second chapter of Philippians, the apostle discloses the successive causes that led to the coronation of Jesus. These are valuable to us because they mark not only the pathway by which He ascended to the throne, but by which we, also, may follow in His footsteps and share in His government and glory.

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and

being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death; yea, the death of the cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and gave unto him the name which is above every name; that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The word "wherefore" points two ways; first to the causes that precede it, and second to the results that follow it. At the battle of Crecy, King Edward of England replied to the call of his son, the Black Prince, for reinforcements, "Let the boy win his spurs." The sovereignty of Jesus was won not simply by inheritance, that He was the only begotten of the Father; it was the triumph of subjection and obedience.

First, He refused to listen to selfish ambition. This was the victory gained over Satan in the temptations of the wilderness. Here the Revised Version brings out the meaning much more clearly than the Authorized Version. Literally, the apostle says, He thought that the being on equality with God was not a thing to be grasped after. Christ had distinctly said, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14: 28). Satan, striving for the lordship, failed and fell from heaven. Jesus, renouncing all ambition for it, not only gained it, but was exalted to the highest place of power. Likewise, in Heb. 12: 2, "Who for the joy that was set before him endured

the cross, despising shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." The preposition "for" is *anti*, well translated "instead of" or "at the price of," which would bring out the meaning, "Instead of the joy that was set before him endured the cross."

Note now the second step, "He emptied himself." Not only seeking no greater glory for Himself, He freely gave up the glory He already had. This included a soul limitation such as our finite minds can scarcely comprehend; otherwise, we never could find in Him an inspiration and guide. "He was made in the likeness of men." In no other way could He be touched with a feeling of all our infirmities, and become tempted in all points like as we are. If the victory of Jesus over temptation had been the victory only of divinity, there would be in it no lesson for us; but in emptying Himself, and being made in the likeness of men, and formed in fashion as a man, His victory over temptation becomes also the victory of humanity. Aeschylus' "Prometheus Bound" is but a faint suggestion of such soul renunciation as this. The subjection was complete because it was self imposed. Yet this is always the price of victory. "He that conquereth himself is greater than he that taketh a city." "He that overcometh, I will give to him to sit down with me in my throne, as I also overcame, and sat down with my Father in his throne." "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit."

This truth, of life through death, of exaltation through subjection, of authority through obedience, is the greatest paradox of history. Jesus gave as the controlling motive of His earthly life: "I am come down from heaven not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." In like manner we are to gain spiritual advancement by the method which the Master Himself pursued,—by a willingness to do the will of the Father.

"He took upon himself the form of a servant." Literally the apostle says, He took upon Himself the form of a bond servant; and became obedient, not in a few things, not simply in those things that were easy and pleasant, but His obedience extended to the limit. "He became obedient unto death." This victory was gained, even with Jesus Himself, not without the greatest suffering and struggle. It caused even the blood drops to ooze from the pores, and wrung from His heart the agonizing cry, "My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me!" It ought to be helpful to us to realize that it was here, on this earth, that Jesus fought the battles and won the victories that resulted in His Lordship. So it seems that this world is God's great testing ground. Each of us is being tried, as it were, by fire, to find whether or not we are willing to yield our own preferences and desires, and will to do the will of God.

But the importance of doing the Father's will is still more evident, when we realize that it is a question not only of spiritual effectiveness, but also of

salvation itself. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father who is in heaven." Nothing else can take the place of obedience. It is an absolute essential. In the economy of God there is no time or place for a human being that will not follow His directions. As Jesus himself said, recorded in John 15: 6; "If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and they gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."

I care not what may be your other qualifications; you may have joined every church from the most gorgeous Catholic cathedral to the plain, old-fashioned Quaker meeting house. You may have been baptized with water fresh from the Holy Jordan. You may have performed all of the rites and ceremonies of every religious order. And yet, if you are not willing to do what God wants you to do, and go where He wants you to go; you must, of necessity, be cast away. The important thing about your life is not that you be, or do, this or that; not that you go to, or abide in, this place or the other. The important thing about every life is, that he does the will of God.

This obedience to divine authority is essential for peace, as well as knowledge, and effectiveness, and salvation. Physicians say this is an age of hysteria, of nervous prostration. The greatest cause of all of this is sin. And what is sin, but disobedience to God? We are trying to go contrary to God's plan,

to split, as it were, crosswise of the grain. When God wants us to go one way and we, like Jonah, proceed to go another way, it makes a cross. When our wills are parallel with His will, there is no cross. Jesus said, "My peace I give unto you," and the peace of Christ was caused, primarily, by His willingness to do the will of the Father. When we tune the instrument of our souls in harmony with the heavenly chorus, there is no discordant note to rasp and jar and wear and worry. "Great peace have they that love thy law." "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." When we bring our lives into conformity to God's eternal purpose, and become laborers together with Him, no longer do we struggle ineffectually against the stream, but prospered by His kindly currents and favoring breezes, with a peaceful voyage, we gain at last the long desired port, which striving alone we would have toiled to reach in vain.

I know not what God has in store for you in the years to come, neither what he has in store for me. I know that it is a very serious thing to put yourself wholly into God's hands to do His will. It may be an overturning of all of your most cherished plans and prospects. It may take you out of your chosen work, and put you into something that you have said you would not do, that you had fought against doing. For, as a rule, if there is anything in which one says, No, to God, he will have to say, Yes, before he can gain a great blessing. Yet it has

come to this, according to the words of our Master. We must either cease our mere verbal profession, or we must unconditionally abandon ourselves to do His will.

Do you believe in Christ? Do you believe in His infinite wisdom, His infinite power, His infinite love? Do you believe that His plan for your life is a better plan than you possibly can form for yourself? Do you believe, that in proportion as you follow this plan, your life, from the eternal standpoint, will be permanently rich and happy and successful? If you do, then you will exclaim with the Psalmist, "I delight to do thy will, O my God."

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS AS LORD IN THE HOME

“Whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3: 23-24).

We are living in an exceptionally practical age. Men and women are asking of everything, What is it worth? No principle is too sacred or secure to escape this test. “By their fruits, ye shall know them,” is the rule that is being applied in every branch of the world’s work. The value of any principle or plan must be clearly demonstrated before it can hope to gain general acceptance. Hence we are led to ask, Is this principle of the Lordship of Jesus applicable to present-day conditions and needs? and when applied, what is its practical effect upon the varied phases of human life and experience? The intrinsic worth of any article is what it will bring in the open market. The intrinsic worth of any principle is according to its ability to be translated and expressed in terms of human thought and activity.

Let us now proceed to consider the results of the application of the principle of Jesus as Lord and Master, in the different avenues of practical life.

First, in the home. The homes are the thermometers of any community. They are the foundation of our civilization. Any permanent uplift to the character and condition of any people must begin right here. Let the church and the school exert the greatest power they are able, but if the influence of the home is antagonistic, it will largely neutralize all their efforts for good. Any revival of religion that does not penetrate into the very heart of the home life, purifying, beautifying, and ennobling its every-day experiences, must be a practical failure. If the authority of Jesus as Lord were accepted and applied in no other portion of human activity, but was recognized in every household, there would be a leaven at work which would regenerate the entire measure of society.

"And when he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was noised that he was in the house" (Mark 2:1). Jesus, in the home! The unseen Hearer of every conversation; the unseen Guest at every meal; the unseen Personality directing and prompting, correcting, restraining, inspiring the thoughts and actions of the members of the family circle! How wonderful the thought! If Jesus is the head of the household, it cannot long be kept secret. A most powerful influence will radiate from that center, which will be manifest throughout the entire community.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock: if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me"

(Rev. 3: 20). These words are applicable not only to the church but likewise to the home. But if Jesus comes in, He will want to abide. You will no longer be able to say that you are master of your own house. He will want the key to every room, and with His divine sunlight drive out the darkness of selfishness and sin, and illuminate the entire dwelling with His marvelous presence and power.

It is in no sense cheapening or lowering the dignity of the King of kings to think of Him as the Sovereign of every department of the household. Jesus as Lord of the kitchen, directing the character of the food to be cooked, and the treatment of the servants by the mistress, and of the mistress by the servants. I like to think of Jesus in the home at Bethany. I see the scrupulous Martha, cumbered and distracted with much serving, and hear her as she comes up to Jesus and says, "Lord, dost thou not care that my sister did leave me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me." Then I hear the Master's gentle and kind, but strong, reproof, "Martha, Martha, thou art anxious and troubled about many things: but one thing is needful." Methinks when the influence of Jesus becomes paramount in the household, that many a home-keeper worn and worried with an over-anxiety about domestic duties may hear and heed this same loving admonition.

At another time, Jesus had said to His disciples, "Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye

shall put on. Is not the life more than the food, and the body than the raiment?" Of course, He did not mean to imply that these things should not have due consideration. Yet if Jesus were to have His way, much of the thought and strength in many a home now wasted in extra cooking and dressing would be devoted to the cultivation of a deeper and fuller spiritual life.

We have yet to learn that there is a Christian and an unchristian way of doing every legitimate work. There is a Christ way of cooking a meal, of sweeping a house, of teaching a school, as well as of offering a prayer or preaching a sermon. A man may be immoral and deny Jesus as Lord in even the most spiritual spheres and offices, and in like manner can enthrone Him even in the least.

Let us acknowledge Jesus as Lord of the library also. You can well judge the character of any family when you see the titles of the books upon their tables and shelves. If they were to know that Jesus was to be a guest in their home for the next week would there not be some books and periodicals that would be banished to the attic or, better, consigned to the fire? There is no wonder why it is so difficult to get many interested in spiritual things, when the mental pabulum upon which they have been feeding has dulled their appetites for the higher and nobler thoughts and feelings.

What book would be conspicuous in the library, if Jesus were to come? When Walter Scott was dying he said, "Bring me the book." They asked, "What

book?" The great poet replied, "There is but one book." In many homes, if they know the pastor is to call, they will get down the big family Bible and see that it is very carefully dusted. But too often the dust is collecting so thick upon the Word of God that you could almost write "damnation" on the cover.

The Master Himself in His earthly ministry, gave evidence of a thorough study of the Scriptures. And methinks that in those hidden years at Nazareth, over which the Father has seemingly intentionally drawn a curtain, if we could but penetrate that veil, I am sure we would see that divine Youth scanning with eagerness the rolls of the prophets and poets and historians, whose pens had been guided by the Spirit of God. It was in the Galilean home, amid the duties of common life, that Jesus earned the words of praise which met Him at the threshold of His public ministry, from the lips of the eternal Father Himself, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Let us think of Jesus also as Lord of the parlor. Would not His presence and influence, if seen and felt, often change the current of conversation? Would it not stop the tongue of criticism and of gossip, and turn the thoughts and words into different channels? Would it not remove that mask of deceit, which seems the bane of modern society; and bring forth that sincerity and simplicity, which is essential for the development of the truest and the best?

Yea, let us confess Jesus as Lord of the bedroom. No more tossing upon the pillow in the long hours of the night, distracted by wear and worry. "Peace, I leave with you;" said the Master, "my peace I give unto you." And if the great Lord Christ could stretch forth His hand, so soon to be pierced by the cruel nails, and with a gesture and word of authority calm the storm-swept waves, can we not think that the life that is hid with Christ in God can have each hour that calm repose which follows faith and trust? A sleepless night means finally a troubled day. Let Jesus be the Guardian of thy slumber. Listen to his words, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Not rest from your toil, but in your toil. He gives the rest that follows obedience and trust.

And, further, would not the authority and spirit of the blessed Lord transform many a feature of the domestic experiences? Experiences of which the family physician alone, perhaps, can give a testimony. Let Jesus here, in reality, be crowned Lord in the relationships of husband and wife, of parents and children; and much will be changed. In many homes the furrows would be smoothed from the brow; the rasping tone would be taken from the voice; and the secret sin, that has dwarfed and checked and blighted spiritual development, would be banished forever from the soul.

If the religion of Jesus is to exert the influence that it ought, to attract the indifferent and un-

lieving, its practical value must be manifest in these every-day experiences of life. Too often it is impossible to distinguish the follower of Christ from the unbeliever, by his conduct in the domestic circle. Nowhere is the genuineness of a religious profession put to a severer test than in the home. You ought to have the testimony of a man's wife before you determine as to the sincerity or falsity of his religious profession. And, on the other hand, many a husband has remained away from Christ because he has not beheld the spirit of the Master, in the actions of his professedly Christian wife.

There are thousands of homes where the parents would feel indignant if it were intimated that they were not religious. Yet the Bible is not read; the members of the family circle are not summoned to the season of daily prayer; and no thanks are offered at the meal to the loving Father, who has bestowed His numerous bounties. Spiritual subjects are rarely mentioned in the conversation. Selfishness and appetite and temper are too frequently in glaring evidence. Let us have a great revival of religion, beginning with Jesus crowned King in these homes; and the unbelieving, ungodly world without would be drawn to His blessed, beautiful Gospel, as never since the first century.

CHAPTER IX

JESUS AS LORD IN EDUCATION

Never has the value of learning been more clearly recognized and emphasized than it is to-day. But there is present, in many quarters, a dangerous tendency to exalt intellect for its own sake. Humboldt well said that science, philosophy, literature, even religion, were but the scaffolding to build a man. Eliminate the moral and the spiritual elements from education, and you would have but a poor and emasculated remnant, not worth your while nor mine.

While in a sense, every honest occupation should be regarded as sacred, yet this is especially true of the profession of the teacher. No man has a moral right to stand before the youth, simply for the sake of money or of imparting cold, barren facts of learning, any more than he has to stand in the pulpit with such motives. After all, it is the teacher rather than the text-book that is the important element in education. The personality behind the desk influences the character more than the printed page. Many a student of school or college will forget the facts of mathematics, history, or language, but the power of a noble Christlike personality in the life of the instructor will leave its impress for good throughout eternity. Aaron Burr, while stand-

ing, as it were, at the cross roads of life, is said to have turned on to the wrong way, through the advice of a negatively religious professor.

The words of Jesus, "Unto whom much is given, from him shall much be required," are applicable to no one more than to the modern teacher. During the formative years of a child's life, he is in the instruction of the schoolroom a large part of his waking hours. How great the opportunity and the responsibility! Let the authority of the Great Teacher be recognized in every class-room, and it would become the supreme end and object of every method and system of education to develop the life eternal. No one could estimate the importance of the transformation which would thus be wrought in a large part of almost every school system, public and private. Some one has defined a liberal education, as the ability to look at everything in the right perspective. In other words, it is the desire and the power to put the first things first. Is it not then the recognition, in the final analysis, of this great central truth of Jesus as Master? of seeking first His kingdom and His righteousness, and being assured that all other things essential will be added?

In their selection of teachers, boards of education have often considered simply the book learning of the applicant, rather than his moral and spiritual qualifications. And the fruits of this shortsighted policy have been manifest in the generation growing to maturity. If Christian character is important in the home and pulpit, it is also important here. I

would rather have a teacher of the most meager intellectual attainments instruct my child, than to have one whose mind was packed with learning if he was impelled by ignoble incentives. It takes more than study and travel and degrees to make a teacher. It takes more than money and buildings and titled professors to make an institution of learning. And it takes more than a full brain to make a noble character and a saved soul.

The tendency of the times is to eliminate entirely religion from education; to divorce the intellectual from the moral and spiritual. When the Athenian sailors entered the Aegean harbors they bowed in homage to the statue of Minerva, the goddess of learning, which surmounted the Parthenon. We call that heathen worship. Yet there is a drift in our day in practically the same direction. That the idol is idealized rather than materialized does not change the fact. Paul said that even knowledge would vanish away. Learning, in the last analysis, is only a means to an end. Atheism is really as incongruous in the school as in the church, in the teacher as in the preacher. Any system of education that denies the authority of Christ, that ignores the moral and spiritual development, and aims at anything less than preparation for the life eternal, must fall far short of comprehending its true mission.

We think of our civilization as a great structure having as its foundation morality. Without morality there can be no enduring government. No nation of the past ever fell on account of its pov-

erty, or lack of intellectual education. The age of Pericles in Athens and of Augustus in Rome were among the wealthiest and the wickedest, the most literary and the most licentious in the history of humanity. With all of their intellectual culture, the Greek character was as hard and cold as their marble statues. The desire of the Greeks, expressed to Philip, the apostle, "Sir, we would see Jesus," echoes the heart need and longing of human life. It was a tribute which intellectuality paid to spirituality. There is no branch of learning which cannot contribute to the development of a broader and higher and richer soul life, if this shall be made its ultimate object by the teacher.

And what is true of the instructor is just as true of the pupil. Any course of study that has for its aim simply to fit the student for the accumulation of money, is a degradation of true learning. There is such a thing as the prostitution of the mind as well as of the body. With the acknowledgment of the authority of the great Teacher, the routine of education becomes brightened and blessed. It helps to lift study out of the mire of drudgery, and gives to it the greatest and noblest incentive. The wise man well said in regard to wisdom:

"Yea, with all thy getting get understanding.

"Exalt her and she will promote thee;

"She will bring thee to honour, when thou dost embrace her.

"She will give to thy head a chaplet of grace;

"A crown of beauty will she deliver to thee."
(Prov. 4: 7-9).

It is not enough simply to know a thing, but also to understand how to use it. This marks a distinct difference between knowledge and wisdom. The great lack in human lives for the attainment of valuable results is in the lack of proper and sufficient motives. When Jesus is crowned as Lord of the life, it gives to the student this most valuable element of character. Truth is not simply an array of facts. It is an attitude of being. It is a vital force. "The first man Adam became a living soul. The last Adam became a life-giving spirit."

Great is the temptation to the learned man to trust in his human knowledge for salvation and direction, just as it is to the rich man to trust in his riches. It is apt to become his god. It was for this reason that Paul declared that "Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise" (1 Cor. 1:26-27). Jesus said that except a man became a child he could not enter the kingdom of heaven. Greatness is simplicity. It is a false culture that destroys the appetite and aspiration for the spiritual. True culture makes the soul realize his ignorance and limitations, and causes him to stand with bowed head and listen for God's message to his soul, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he hath understanding and knoweth me; that I am Jehovah who

exerciseth loving kindness, justice, and righteousness in the earth" (Jer. 9:23-24).

His learning undoubtedly made Paul a greater messenger for Christ than he could otherwise have been. A trained and disciplined mind, he brought, in loving consecration to his Master's service. In such a life there is usually a greater struggle, for there is more to overcome. But, by the law of compensation, the victory, being won, is proportionately greater in its results.

When learning receives the Lord of learning as her King, and realizes the greatness of the words of Jesus, "I am the truth," it brings both the teacher and the pupil to a new plane of thought. It enables them to look at life in the right perspective, from the divine point of view, so they are enabled to discern what is really small and what is truly great. It gives to education a higher and broader aim, a preparation for life eternal. While slighting the training of no part of the nature, he that is Christ controlled recognizes the infinite worth of the soul, and rightly lays the emphasis on the spiritual as supreme. While there has never been a time, as now, when scholarship so generally has confessed its faith in Jesus as the Son of God; yet, like the utilization of natural forces, the possibilities for the application of Christ's Lordship in education has only dawned. Fortunate for himself and for the world, when the scholar grasps the opportunity to come, like Nicodemus, to the great Teacher, and learn from Him the essentials for the ageless life, and for entrance into the eternal school of the divine kingdom.

CHAPTER X

JESUS AS LORD IN SOCIETY

Much has been said and written regarding the bane of the caste system of heathen lands, yet sad to say, too much of this same spirit is evident in so-called Christian countries. There are many who would be surprised if there was the least doubt of their religious sincerity, and the genuineness of their Christian character, yet would regard it beneath their dignity to mingle with those in lower walks of life. It has been said that the test of a true gentleman is not how he treats his superiors or his equals, but how he treats his inferiors.

After the Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost and the glorious results were manifest in Jerusalem, it is related that the disciples had all things common. It has been proved that this did not mean the denial of all right to personal possessions, but rather it was fulfilling the command, "Not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others."

The spirit of modern society, with its exclusive cliques and classes, is absolutely in antagonism to the spirit and authority of Jesus. When an officer of a church tapped a poor man on the shoulder, as he knelt at the altar by the side of the Duke of Wellington, hero of Waterloo, the Duke turned and

said in kind reproof, "Let him alone, sir; before the altar of Christ we all are equal." While this great man might rightly and naturally recognize a difference in ability and attainments; yet he realized the truth of the words of Jesus, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother."

There is nothing that is doing more to keep the unsaved apart from the church, than the presence of this spirit of social caste among Christ's professed followers. The rich need the companionship and friendship of the poor, just as much as the poor do of the rich. The educated need the contact with the ignorant, as well as the ignorant with the educated. It was hard for Jesus to teach his disciples the great lesson of the regality of service. The worldly conception of greatness had been inseparably connected with wealth and authority, with costly apparel and possessions; but Jesus reversed this. "He that is great among you," said he, "shall be servant of all." "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister."

What could be more touching and beautiful than that incident during the last feast of the passover that Jesus was to eat with His disciples? The Master arose from the supper and laid aside His garments; and He took a towel, and girded Himself; and He began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith He was girded. Imagine, if you can, the look of surprise upon the faces of the little company. A task which all of

them, doubtless, had thought beneath their dignity was being performed without a murmur by the Prince of heaven. When He had washed their feet, and taken His garments, and sat down again, He said, "Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me, Teacher, and, Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

A junior class in an academy rejected with indignation the president's suggestion that they wait on the tables at the senior banquet. The request was not repeated; but when the evening arrived the president himself and other members of the faculty cheerfully served the supper. This was the greatest lesson of the entire school year.

Has mankind begun, even yet, to realize what a revolution it would make in society if there was a practical application of this principle and spirit of Jesus in social life? What could do more to awaken the great mass of unbelieving and indifferent humanity to the practical value of the Christian faith than the constant repetition of such scenes in the current of daily experiences? True, there has always been much of this spirit manifest in human lives. And this has been the saving salt and kindling light that has kept Christianity alive and active throughout the centuries. But are we not, as yet, only at the threshold of the possibilities for the progress of religion, in recognizing that the royalty of Jesus is found in His spirit of self-sacrifice and service? Selfishness, of course, is the blight of society. A

faith that stops with mere forgiveness for past sins is not enough. But when the soul not only sees in Jesus the justification for transgressions, but also enthrones Him in the heart, this strikes at the seat of the disease. Self and Jesus cannot both occupy the throne. The crowning of Christ banishes jealousy and envy and strife, and changes a subject of the kingdom of hell into a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

There are many of the teachings of Jesus regarding social life which have barely, as yet, begun to be regarded as authoritative by the large part of professed Christian people. Take for example, the words of Christ as recorded in the fourteenth chapter of Luke's Gospel. "When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor rich neighbors; lest haply they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, bid the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; because they have not wherewith to recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed in the resurrection of the just." Let us ask ourselves, Have we even tried to follow this admonition of Jesus? Yet how blessed is the testimony of those who have.

Another great benefit of the acceptance of the Kingship of Jesus is in helping to solve the problems that confront us regarding the varied social pleasures and customs and demands. There has been an endeavor to specify just what the professed Christian

ought to refrain from doing; and doubtless this definiteness in bringing under the ban many questionable things, has been of practical benefit. But even a superficial student of the subject of popular amusements, for example, has been confronted with the fact that it is impossible to make a list so complete and discriminating as to say just what should be approved and what condemned. There is only one thing that can settle this question and settle it rightly and permanently; it is found in the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord.

Many young people especially have come with the question, "Can I do this or that and still be a Christian?" I have replied often that I cannot consent to be their monitor. It is easy to give up someone else's idols. And often,

"Compound for sins they are inclined to
By damning those they have no mind to."

It is not simply what the preacher says, or the church says, but it is what Jesus says, that should be regarded as the real basis for Christian decision. I belong to Jesus; what would my Lord and Master have me do? Here is a rule that will solve all of the doubts and difficulties in modern social life. Then the true disciple will not ask, What can I do and still be a Christian? but rather, How can I best glorify my King?

It is not sufficient to say, "I will go nowhere that I cannot take Jesus with me." This is a negative proposition. Rather let it be reversed, and make

this as the principle of conduct: "I will go nowhere that Jesus does not lead the way."

The pilot on a Mississippi steamboat was asked by a passenger if he knew where all of the shoals and snags and bars in the river were. "No," he replied, "I do not." "Well," said the passenger, surprised, "I should think the company would not regard you as a competent man to steer the boat." "No," said he, "I don't know where all of the snags and shoals are, but I do know where the deep water is." The life that yields itself to Jesus, and says with Mary at the tomb, "Rabboni," my Master, that life will be conscious every day of the divine leading, and be fully assured regarding the thing to do and the place to go.

Let us note in this connection the spirit of Jesus made dominant in social functions. The all-absorbing passion prevalent for dress and entertainment surely cannot receive the divine sanction. So many are seeking for the source of enjoyment in the things without instead of the things within the soul. Methinks the words of the Messianic Prophet would be on the lips of the Son of God many a time were He to come back in the flesh to earth, "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labor for that which satisfieth not?" Witness the extravagant expenditures and lavish display, also, in the name of charity, to realize a few paltry dollars for the poor! Surely in such cases charity covereth a multitude of sins.

Where the authority of Jesus is accepted Dives no

longer will consent to revel in luxury and allow Lazarus to lie at the gate in need. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2). This law becomes infinitely stronger than any human enactment when we recognize it as the mandate of the Lord of glory. And wherever there is an individual that accepts His authority, you have a life radically changed, not only in his attitude toward God, but manifestly also in his relations with his fellow men.

This practical enthronement of Jesus in social relations means not only the dethronement of caste and arrogance and selfishness, but also of worldliness. It means the advent of the separate life. Not the separateness of seclusion but of devotion. The life that follows Jesus will be in the world, but like his Leader, not of the world. He is in the world but the world is not in him. His citizenship will be in heaven.

"Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the vain glory of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (1 John 2:15-17).

I take it that this is practical sanctification; set apart for the Master's use. With the yielding of the will to Christ, the changed attitude toward the world will naturally result. As the Prince of heaven

is admitted, the prince of this world will be cast out. Marvel not then if the world hate you. "If ye were of the world, the world would love its own." Society lashes with criticism the soul that will not bow to her decrees. But her scoffs and slights amount to naught when you have the commendation of your conscience and your Lord. What you may lose in popularity, you more than gain in power.

It has been the unholy alliance of believers and unbelievers, that has brought reproach upon the cause of Christ, and paralyzed the nerve of spiritual effectiveness. Many in their devotions adore the Saviour's name, who in their social relations deny His claims. It is this that so often brings religion into disrepute. "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial?" A life must live above the world to be of benefit to the world. The professed disciple of Christ whose life cannot be distinguished from the ungodly about him is shorn, like Samson, of his power. The spiritual salt in his soul has lost its savor, and it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men.

Christ crowned in social relationships means the birth of a glorious revival. It means in society the development of the only true liberty and joy. He encourages all that makes the life broader and deeper and richer and happier. He denies us only those indulgences that would bring to ourselves or others

injury or pain. His law alone can solve the problems in social life, and rectify the conscience. His spirit alone can eliminate the blight of self-seeking, and infuse the blessedness of giving and serving. His power alone can draw the devotee of society from his slavery to the round of social functions and dissipations, and inspire him with the enthusiasm of a new purpose, helpfulness to humanity, and loyalty to the Lord of lords.

CHAPTER XI

JESUS AS LORD IN POLITICS

Let us now consider the practical effect of the application of the Lordship of Jesus to political life. There are many who are interested in the great reform movements for the amelioration of unfavorable social conditions, who seemingly have no interest in Christianity. Whenever you separate religion from life, it is destructive to the highest interests of both. As we have seen, civilization is founded on morality, and the foundation of morality is religion. Religion is morality alive. It is the tree that bears moral fruit. It has been well said that religion begins with right thinking and ends with right conduct.

Many, in these days, seemingly have an idea of the salvation of society apart from the salvation of the individual. Plato well said, "The state is but the individual writ large." It is easy to build up a state with good citizens, but impossible with bad ones. There is much truth in the saying of our American humorist, "You cannot have an honest horse race until first you have an honest human race." Many have seemed to think that legislation was the panacea for all of our social ills. Laws can do something, but they cannot do everything. Edmund Burke spoke well when he said, "You can-

not make men moral by an act of parliament." Yet along with this it is well to add the words of Gladstone, "The object of law should be to make it as hard as possible to do wrong, and as easy as possible to do right."

It needs but a superficial observer to appreciate the great need of reformation in political life. Every other motive is appealed to generally, except the motive of righteousness. If anywhere, the Golden Rule and Decalogue should have a place it ought to be in politics. Many who style themselves good citizens are unquestionably controlled by the basest incentives. A prominent politician in one of our great cities, though himself a religious man, frankly declared that he would much rather for the hope of success have the support of the saloon than of the church.

Whatever may be your personal opinions in regard to the end of this dispensation, whether you believe the world is growing worse or whether it is growing better, yet if you are a sincere follower of Jesus you must heartily desire that social conditions be made just as favorable as possible for the growth of the Christian graces. And few will deny that with a great, if not the greater, part of professed Christians, their religion has little influence over their political life.

There is too sharp a division between the sacred and the secular. While a man may be very pious in his prayers and in his testimonies, yet he may be absolutely infidel in the caucus or at the polls.

I firmly believe that if we are to root out the great social and political evils of our day, we must dig deeper. A moral reform that is carried on apart from the religion of Jesus must of necessity end in failure. Nowhere are the words more practical, "Seek first the kingdom of God," than here. Whenever you get a man earnestly and definitely to acknowledge the authority of Jesus over his life, you have one that is not only going to pray right, but he is going to vote right. For the difficulty is not so much with men's heads as with their hearts. "For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness: all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man." There are, then, two parts to any great moral reform: first, the changing of the inner life of the individual; and second, the expression of this change in every department of his activities.

But many have prayed, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven," and yet have gone out in political life to prevent, as far as possible, the answer to their own prayer. "Thy kingdom come." Whose kingdom? The kingdom of the heavenly Father. But as we have seen, the kingdom of the Father is for us the kingdom of His dear Son. When we pray, "Thy kingdom come," what do we mean? Come where? To heaven? It is already there. Jesus proceeded to explain in part

what the coming of the kingdom meant when He said, "Thy will be done"; be done here and now, on this earth, by you and by me, even as it is already being done by the angels of heaven.

The ballot box ought to be as sacred to the Christian as the ark of the covenant was to the Israelite. Every time he casts a ballot, it ought to be a practical repetition of this prayer, "Thy will be done on earth." I see no other way to bring about a permanent transformation in the political world than this, the acknowledgment of Jesus as Lord. But now the larger part of professedly Christian men do not acknowledge the Mastership of Jesus in determining their political choice. Their real master is the party boss. They are governed more by material and money considerations, more by expediency, by prejudice, by habit, or by social and family connections. A great proportion of men belong to this party or that because their fathers did. How many so-called Christian men will give as their reasons for their connection with this or that party that they believe it is what Jesus, their Master, would have them do?

Nothing could do more to clear the sky and purify the atmosphere of politics than the practical acceptance of the authority of Jesus. Could you imagine a man supremely impelled by the personality of Christ going to the ballot box and voting for a public official whom he knew to be personally immoral and corrupt? He would rather cut off his right hand than do it. Men that listen to the voice of Jesus are asking in the political world not, Is it

expedient? Is it popular? Will it pay? but, Is it right? or better, Is it Christian?

The emphasis of this principle in politics must inevitably tend to bring men out of their hiding. They will have to commit themselves. Jesus clearly said, "He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad." And again, "He that is ashamed of me and my words in the midst of this sinful and adulterous generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed." We have been wont to look upon this confession of Christ simply as an outward expression in a public religious service. It is this, but it is more. "Whose I am, whom also I serve," carried out in the primary and at election by every professed follower of Jesus, would drive the vile herd of political scoundrels headlong, like the swine, into the sea.

How long could any government be in league with the liquor business, which defiles and debases everything it touches, if even the Christian voters would acknowledge the authority of Jesus? How long would we have to bear up against the disgrace of a large part of the revenues that run our government being derived from this same business? Men would say, Rather than let my sanction be given to such a partnership with sin, I would suffer myself to be clothed in rags, to live in a hut, and to feed upon the poorest crust. But as long as the professedly godly and ungodly, virtuous and vicious, vote without protest, for the same candidates and belong to the

same party, the devil will jeer in delight at Christian profession.

"Jesus, my Master," is to be the dividing line in the political world, which must bring about the change. It is this that must proclaim the dissolution of partnership between the Christian and the world. Let this great truth be emphasized as it ought to be, and men in politics will either stop their parading under Christ's colors, or else will come out as loyal disciples and follow Him to the end. Long enough have we heard this nonsense that religion and politics are separate considerations. Any religion that has not enough virility and power to make its presence felt in a man's choice of candidates and of party, has not enough of the saving salt and light to give the faintest hope of finding acceptance before the judgment bar of God.

I am not appealing in favor of any particular candidate or any particular party. Let us emphasize principles. It is principles, principles alone, that are eternal. A classic has been defined as a production that is applicable to any day or generation. Here, at least, we have a principle that can be called a classic: Jesus, as Master, would have solved the political problems of the past and solved them right. He will solve them to-day, and will as long as man lives upon the earth, until the elements dissolve and melt with fervent heat.

Not only would the application of this great truth revolutionize the voting at the polls, but also the making and the execution of laws. "The powers

that be are ordained of God" has been quoted to uphold the divine right of kings. Let it rather be quoted to define the responsibility of those that have been placed in authority. Public office has been defined as a public trust. It is more than this. It is a divine trust. Now legislators are influenced in their votes largely by how it will affect their party in the coming campaign, or by what bearing it will have on their own political future. If a man should arise in a State legislature, or in Congress, and give as his reason for voting as he did, that he believed it was what Jesus, his Master, would have him do, his associates would doubtless think that he was beside himself, or that much learning had unbalanced his mind. Many would take it as a stupendous joke. But let him give as his reason that he was following the advice and suggestion of the acknowledged leader of his party, and it would be accepted without comment. Does this not clearly show how far, as yet, we are from the acknowledgment and the application of the authority of Jesus in public life?

The application of this great truth would do much to lift politics out of the mire of disrepute in which it is at the present day. A great many of our best citizens look upon the desire for and the holding of office with a feeling akin to disgust. Almost instinctively they have come to consider it as the field of the demagogue and brigand, of those who are impelled by the basest of motives and ambitions. All will agree that this ought not so to be.

If in times of war men are willing to give their time and strength and wealth and even life in the service of their country, why should they not be as willing to do so in times of peace? Our nation needs to be purified as well as fortified. The greatest dangers to any land are not from without, but from within; not from the invasion of a foreign foe, but from the vicious and lawless elements at home.

Every man must have some source of inspiration and commendation. For a man in public life to follow the leadership of Jesus will inevitably mean criticism and difficulty. Often the world will turn its back upon him. But with the support and the approval of his heavenly Leader, he can go on with cheer and confidence unto the end.

I would not, for a moment, imply that public officials have not been to a greater or less extent in the past influenced by the Christian incentive. Scores have, unquestionably, been earnest and honest disciples of their divine Saviour. What I do say is that this motive has not been so potent and predominant as to make its presence manifest. Too often where the authority of Jesus has been recognized it has been with a half apology for fear of a charge of weakness on the part of its advocate.

Let every professedly Christian executive and legislator throughout the land be bold and aggressive enough to acknowledge his firm allegiance to the personal Christ, not simply in his private life, but also as his Lord and Master in his public acts, and

it would produce the greatest sensation of the generation. Yea, it would, I believe, be instrumental in bringing about the greatest religious revival in the history of Christianity.

CHAPTER XII

JESUS AS LORD IN BUSINESS

Let us next note the application of the Lordship of Jesus to business life. I speak now of business in the limited sense, as that department of human activity which has for its object the direct purpose of earning a living and of accumulating property.

There has been in many quarters an indiscriminate condemnation of wealth, that is not borne out by the teachings of Jesus. He clearly taught that ability is the measure of responsibility, "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required." Possession of power, social, intellectual, political, or financial, measures the extent of our accountability to our heavenly Father. It is true that wherever Jesus spoke of riches, He always spoke with a word of warning: "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God." The reason of this is manifest, for while God loves the rich man the same as he does the poor man, the temptation and tendency of the former is to trust in riches.

Accumulating wealth may not be a vice, and enduring poverty may not be a virtue. The poverty at least of wastefulness or sloth is no passport into heaven. Lazarus was borne by the angels inside the

gates not simply because he was poor, but he must have had elements of character which Jesus did not take time to mention. Neither, on the other hand, did the rich man pass to his merited doom on account of his possessions. It was on account of his selfishness, his disregard of divine authority, and of the needs of his fellow men. He was condemned not for his wealth, but for waste.

When Jesus said that it was hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, it was a simple statement of the fact that his property was liable to become his king. You can go north or south, but you cannot go both ways at once. A man does not need to be rich to be a worshiper of mammon. He may not have a dollar in the world, but if his ideal of success is a money standard he is not putting Jesus first. For example, you might go to a man working on the street at the smallest wage, and say to him, "My friend, what is your ideal of success?" He would reply, "Why, that's easy; the successful man is the man with the big bank account, that lives in the fine house on the boulevard, that has many horses and carriages and servants." Perhaps he is himself almost a pauper, yet riches are in reality his god.

The battle of the Christian life to-day is, to a great extent, the battle of the pocket-book. Many a man will be religious in everything else until it comes to a question of his financial interests. When Paul and Silas came to Philippi there were certain men who were doubtless not concerned with

what these missionaries taught, until they cast the evil spirit out of the maid who brought them gain by her fortune telling. "But when her masters saw that their hope of gain was gone, they laid hold on Paul and Silas, and dragged them into the market place before the rulers."

So it was at Ephesus where there was a certain man named Demetrius, who made silver shrines of Diana and brought not a little business unto the craftsmen. He and his associates did not care how much Paul taught a new religion as long as it did not affect their business. But he saw that in proportion as men turned to Christ, they turned away from the worship of the heathen goddess; and consequently the demand for images of Artemis was growing less. Then he called an indignation meeting and said, "Sirs, ye know that by this business we have our wealth. And ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they are no gods, that are made with hands: and not only is there danger that this our trade come into disrepute; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana be made of no account, and that she should even be deposed from her magnificence whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. And when they heard this, they were filled with wrath, and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians."

We find a like condition of affairs in society to-day. The great root which is giving strength and nourish-

ment to the poisonous tree of drunkenness and licentiousness and thievery is, of course, the money root. Take away the element of gain from the saloon, the brothel, and the gambling house, that trinity of hell, and you would drive them from the land. Men do not delight in the degradation and destruction of their fellow men simply for its own sake, but for the financial returns. While there are other ideals which men are putting on the throne, there are other demons which are battling to win supremacy—appetite, pleasure and pride—yet it is the money god that is disputing most effectively the claims of Jesus for kingship.

“The love of money is a root of all kinds of evil.” The love of other things is a root of some kinds of evil, but nothing so truly as this can be termed, “a root of all kinds of evil.” We, ourselves, are living in an especially materialistic age of the world. Men are money mad. They are caring more about money than they are about manhood, more about coin than character, more about dollars than duty. It has been wisely said that many more are interested in making a living than they are in making a life.

The Mastership of Jesus comes directly in antagonism with the spirit of the age, and Jesus will brook no rival. He quietly but firmly declares, “If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me.” He said that if a man cared more for possessions or position, or even home or friends, he could not be His disciple. These words may seem too radical, yet

they will stand our closest consideration. If Jesus is to be Lord at all, He must be Lord of all. He must have first place; He is worthy of it; He is entitled to it. It is not simply His right and due, but it is absolutely essential for the greatest blessing upon the individual life.

Few, if any, would argue that the Lordship of Jesus is the regnant principle in modern business life. Many other motives, especially the one mentioned—money getting—are far more dominant. And nowhere will the emphasis of this principle bring more and more radical changes than when applied to the methods and motives of the commercial world. If even among the men who are professedly religious, who would not hesitate to declare themselves as Christians, Jesus was acknowledged as the head of their business, controlling, directing and inspiring their plans and policy, the impetus given to the cause of Christ would be immeasurable.

There is a blighting infidelity prevalent in our day, which admits the truth of the historic Christ, but decidedly doubts the possibility of His life and teachings being applied to our modern civilization. Many regard His character as ideal but impractical; they hold His commandments in admiration rather than in operation. They say that the account of the life that Jesus lived was a beautiful existence, amidst the simple, rustic conditions of Galilee or Judea; but it is impossible to follow such a policy amidst the difficulties and perplexities of our complex social system. This is the kind of

religion possessed by those who the apostle said were holding a form of godliness, but had denied the power thereof. And he exhorted that from these we should also turn away.

No man has a right to engage in any business in which he cannot take Jesus as the head partner in that business. And no one who confesses faith in Christ has any right to limit the scope of His supremacy. The man that professes to have entered the kingdom of heaven, and yet will not allow the King of that kingdom to have His way in his every day affairs, ought to have little hope of the validity of his claims for eternal life.

Once, in a conversation with a shrewd and able lawyer, I was endeavoring to show to him the great opportunity he had in his profession to impress upon his associates the supreme value and necessity of the Christian life; that there never was a time when earnest Christian character counted for more in business than to-day; the opportunity of exemplifying among men the Christ method of life, and of winning them, not simply by words, but by daily influence and example and conduct, to love and serve Him,—that this is, in the truest sense, a golden harvest field.

"But," said he, "you do not mean to imply that that is a practical life for the business or professional man to try to live in our day?" Said I, "Did you not say that you were a Christian?" "Oh, yes," he replied, "I believe in Jesus." "What is it to believe in Jesus?" I asked. "Is it to believe

simply that He was born of the Virgin Mary, that He wrought miracles, that He spoke words of wisdom, that He was crucified and rose from the grave and ascended into heaven?" "Well," he replied, "I suppose we ought to add a belief that He died for our sins and rose again for our justification."

"Yes," said I, "that is true, but have we any right to continue in sin, that grace may abound? If Christ rose from the dead and ascended into heaven, are we believing in a dead Christ or a living Christ? If a living Christ, then He must bear some vital relationship to our lives. We are told that He is our Advocate, our Helper, at the right hand of the Father. And more than this, the Father has given to Him a name which is above every name; henceforth He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

"Ought the words of Jesus, 'Follow me,' to apply simply to the disciples in Galilee, or to you and me also?" "Why," he replied, "I suppose, to us as well as them." "If that be true," said I, "then what does it mean to follow Jesus? What does it mean to believe in Him? Does it not mean both that He gave Himself for our redemption, and also that He lives for our guidance and direction? If we are to follow Jesus are we not to endeavor to find out what He would have us do, and then by His grace and strength to do it?" "Oh, yes," he replied, with a smile, "I suppose so, but you don't expect a man to do it, do you? You are talking," said he, "upon one plane of life, and I am living

upon another. If I should try to make the principles of Jesus operative in my profession, I would have to cut my practice in two. I could not afford to do it."

"Why," said I, "you cannot afford to do anything else. If one thing at least included in belief in Christ is to believe in Christ's method of life, then to deny that this method will be most successful for time and eternity, is to deny also the very basis of that belief. While many of us, like Peter, are often forced to admit that we follow Jesus afar off, yet to deny that our purpose and our ideal which we hope more and more fully to attain is to do His will, is really to deny entirely our Christian profession." This man admitted that he had no peace or joy in his religious experience. And it was no wonder, for evidently he had omitted the great principle of obedience.

It would not be possible, in the limit of any fair sized volume or any number of volumes, to follow out in detail, through the complexity of commercial and professional life, the results of the application of Jesus as Master. The thought is capable of endless variations. But we have no other standard of right and wrong than this. These terms are variously interpreted according to the training and the ideals and the surroundings of every individual. Right and wrong may seem one thing to one person, and something far different to another. A man may say he is doing right in politics or business, when he simply means he is doing what is customary. This, in fact, is the root meaning of the word moral.

A cab driver in St. Petersburg one dark night murdered a lady passenger, the sole occupant of his cab. He did it with the motive of robbery. But in taking possession of her valuables he left upon the neck of the dead woman a golden crucifix. When he was put upon the witness stand at his trial he was asked by the prosecuting attorney why he did not take this gold cross also. The man seemed astonished as he replied, "Why, that would be an immoral thing to do."

The real question in every department of life is not simply, Is it right? but, Is it Christian? Is it what Jesus will approve? Christ does not teach one thing to one, and another thing to another. There is one Lord and only one. We may be sure, if the authority of Jesus were acknowledged as supreme in the commercial world, that this principle would act as a restraining force in preventing the thousands of dishonest transactions which are the bane of business. While I believe it would not eliminate the strenuous activity of men to do their best and accomplish the most, yet this would not be done at the expense of any other man.

No man can acknowledge Jesus as a partner in his business and still endeavor to thrust a competitor over the precipice of financial ruin. Where the spirit of Christ is, the aim is always to help and not to harm; not simply to see how much we can get out of the world, but how much we can put into it. Where His spirit is authoritative it must take away the purpose and desire of profiting by the misfor-

tunes of others. It brands as robbery just as much the act that corners the produce and compels another to pay a higher price, as if that extra amount were gained by another system of force, with the bludgeon and the mask and the pistol at the midnight hour. What else is to check the commercial warfare that is driving to desperation and death thousands of victims every year, but the infusing into business life the authority and spirit of Jesus? There is no other name given under heaven whereby we must be saved, not only for eternity but for now. Neither is there any salvation in any other. Jesus indeed saves; He saves not only from the guilt of sin, but also from the power of sin, from the blight of grasping greed and the tyranny of selfishness and force.

Much has been said and written during the last century in regard to the relation of employer and employee. Under the old industrial system, where each man conducted his own business, the problem was a simple one. But with the introduction of machinery and the establishment of great factories and enterprises that have driven the solitary workmen from the field and centered them in large mills and mines, the question has become far more complex in its nature. It is evident that we can never return again to our primitive industrial condition. The effectiveness of combination has become too evident to be given up, and with this changed system there come possibilities both for great blessing and great curse.

Either the condition of mankind will become

decidedly improved, or proportionately worse. It will be according to the motive that is uppermost in men's hearts. If it is the spirit of Cain, which sneeringly says, "Am I my brother's keeper?" it means that the condition of the world's workers will gradually wax worse and worse. If, on the other hand, the spirit of Christ becomes regnant, the combination of industries will bring greater opportunities for service and advancement than were possible under the old system.

It is too true that there has been too much of an estrangement between Christianity and the working man. This has been largely due to the fact of religion being misunderstood and misrepresented. The witnesses for Jesus have often given testimony on the other side. There is no way by which the toilers of this world will get their rights but through the reign of Christ. He took the individual out of the mass and set him by himself, and emphasized by His teachings and His works, that this was a man, a being whom the Father loved, whom He loved, and for whom He was giving His life. "How much then is a man of more value," said He, "than a sheep!" "Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father: but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not therefore; ye are of more value than many sparrows." Jesus emphasized the value of a soul, and as the spirit of Jesus becomes dominant, it dignifies and exalts the importance of the individual.

The relationship that exists in many quarters between employees and their employer is almost unbearable. In place of considering each other as co-laborers whose interests are mutual, too often they regard each other as antagonists. The employer figures how he may obtain the services of his workmen for the smallest sum, and at the close of their years of usefulness, thrusts them off to spend their declining days unpensioned and uncared for, in poverty and need. The workmen, in like manner, too often regard the capitalist as their legitimate prey, and watch for the opportunity when there is an especially great call for the product, to force him by a threatened strike to accede to unfair demands.

And frequently the relationship of employees with one another is no less harsh and hard. If one man occupies a higher place, many beneath are seeking by all means, fair and foul, to pull him from his position and gain it for themselves. It is such things that turn the world in some quarters from becoming a part of the kingdom of heaven into a veritable kingdom of hell.

It was in connection with this thought of the relation of employer and employee that the apostle spoke the words with which we began the chapter. "Servants, obey in all things them that are your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart, fearing the Lord: whatsoever ye do, work heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; knowing that from the

Lord ye shall receive the recompense of the inheritance: ye serve the Lord Christ. For he that doeth wrong shall receive again for the wrong that he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. Masters, render unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

A revival of religion that is real must be one, indeed, that not only brings repentance for sin and forgiveness through faith; but also it must be one that quickens the conscience, awakens nobler impulses and stronger incentives for doing and being, that instills higher ideals, and brings men into vital relationship with the only Source of life.

Let Jesus be acknowledged as Lord in the industrial world and how blessed will be the transformation. In proportion as men comprehend and apply this great principle in their daily toil, it will awaken in the mind of the unbeliever and the ungodly the reality of religion. A man may take Jesus as his Saviour from the guilt of sin, as a plan by which he may escape deserved punishment, and yet if his salvation is arrested at this point the work is but half completed. He may go out into the work of life, and in every act run counter to the plan which God has marked out to bring him eternal success.

Not that any one of us will ever grasp the greatness of the Lordship of Jesus in its completeness; as Paul himself said, "Not that I have already obtained, or am already made perfect: but I press on, if so be that I may lay hold on that for which

also I was laid hold on by Christ Jesus." But in proportion as any employer of men comprehends this great truth, it will take away all spirit of arrogance and tyranny, which might otherwise be engendered by the necessity of constantly directing the labor of others. It will make him realize his responsibility and opportunity of showing forth the spirit of true mastery as Jesus did. He will look upon his position as his parish, that, to the extent of his ability, he is just as much in duty bound to labor for the welfare of those under his authority as is the minister in the pulpit.

Likewise the condition of the employee must be proportionately benefited by the application of this same principle. More and more will he realize the dignity of labor, knowing that his divine Master forever set the seal of God upon the greatness of toil, when He Himself worked at the bench in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth. Such a thought must raise all honest labor out of the drudgery of mere routine. The laborer will see in it more than trading so many hours of toil, and so many molecules of brain and muscle energy, for so many dollars. Any man will do better work with Jesus as his Guide. He will strive to win his Master's approval, working to please Him rather than to please men.

How beautifully Paul brings this out in his letter to the Ephesians. After he has emphasized the reality of the spiritual, and described so clearly how every true follower of Jesus was a part of His spiritual body, the church, of which the Master

Himself was the Head, then he makes a practical application of this in the ordinary work of life, in the relation of man to man, for the settlement of all problems, but especially of the industrial. "Servants, be obedient unto them that according to the flesh are your masters, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; not in the way of eye service, as men pleasers; but as servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as unto the Lord, and not unto men: knowing that whatsoever good thing each one doeth, the same shall he receive again from the Lord, whether he be bond or free. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, and forbear threatening: knowing that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no respect of persons with him."

But it may be asked, How can this great transformation be brought about in the business world? Let it begin with your own life. No matter what your occupation, bring it into subjection to the will of Christ. Make it the great purpose of your work, to do His will. This is your supreme privilege.

I once asked a traveling salesman, seated by my side on the railway train, after we had been some time in conversation, "What is your business?" I meant what line of goods was he selling. He looked at me with a kindly expression of the eye, and replied, "My business, sir, is serving the Lord, but I am selling boots and shoes to pay expenses." Did not this man have, truly, the right idea of life.

Our supreme business is to serve the Lord, and every other interest should be brought into conformity with this.

Such an ambition puts a new motive into every occupation. It makes us believe with the apostle that we are laborers together with God, we as junior partners in His firm, and Jesus the Senior Partner in our own. How great the possibilities of such a partnership! How much will have to be changed in modern business methods; how much added, and how much eliminated, if this principle gains sway! But pray God that this truth may be everywhere proclaimed by him who seeks the advancement of the Master's kingdom, and the exalting and ennobling and saving of human souls.

CHAPTER XIII

JESUS AS LORD IN THE CHURCH

The consideration of Jesus as Lord in the church, in that institution founded for the especial purpose of advancing His kingdom in the earth, might seem at first thought superfluous. Here, if anywhere, we might expect to find the will of Christ supreme.

I speak of the church now, not in the sense of the true body of believers, whether within or without any corporate society, but rather of the visible organizations themselves. But these organized bodies of believers must naturally represent and include almost the entire company on the earth of those who are citizens of the kingdom of heaven. Doubtless there are some sincere followers of Jesus who stand apart from organized Christianity. But these must be the exceptions; for by the law of affinity light will seek light; and when one yields his life to Christ he will naturally seek the fellowship of others who have done the same.

We must not forget that it was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, that the church of Christ became an organized body. In union there is effectiveness. The difference between independent and united Christian effort has been well likened to the difference between an army and a mob. I have no sympathy with those carping critics that stand

outside the churches of all denominations and seek to hide their own sins by magnifying the mistakes of others. No one is more able to discern or more anxious to correct the faults of a family, than is its own most devoted member. So in the church its most loyal adherents are not blind to its shortcomings, neither do they attempt to palliate or deny them. But their criticism is not in condemnation, but for correction. With all its defects, however, the church is the best organization we have; and without its influence and activity, this old world would soon relapse into the darkness of heathenism.

Yet let us ask ourselves the question, Of a large part of organized Christianity, is Jesus the real leader? There is a tendency in some quarters to hold the church itself as supreme, regarding the voice of its dignitaries, as the voice of God. Whenever there is lacking a clear vision of personal responsibility and relationship to the personal Christ, and there still remains a desire for the religious life, it is natural that many will turn to the visible organization for their source of authority. They look for guidance to the church instead of Jesus, the Head of the church. And thus they serve and worship the creature rather than the Creator.

Many, also, will work for the church who will not recognize the authority of its Lord. They become very zealous for their particular society, or class, or denomination; and yet they have no personal acquaintanceship with Jesus. The motive is practically the same as an interest in any other organi-

zation. If they become separated from it by removal or otherwise, their religious activity is apt to wane. This is churchanity, not Christianity. Jesus enthroned means the church advanced, but the church might be advanced and yet its Lord denied.

The mission of the church clearly is to carry on the great work that was begun in the earthly ministry of its Master. It is working under orders. Its aim must be to enthrone in human hearts its Lord, and not itself. "Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth alone; but if it die, it beareth much fruit." Some one has well said that the church, like the individual, might gain the whole world and yet lose its own soul. The church is but a means to an end, and that end is the bringing of lost men to the personal acceptance of Jesus as their Saviour and Master. This is its great mission. And whenever any church organization ceases to bear fruit it loses the reason for its existence.

It is painfully apparent that too often in our day the church is denying its Lord. If Christ came to church, there are many things which surely could not hope to receive His divine approval. The singers are selected with no consideration, frequently, of their spiritual, or sometimes even of their moral fitness; but simply on account of their musical ability. Their voices pretend to sound the praises of Him whom their private lives deny. If Jesus were to have His way in such churches, would it be hard to determine the result?

All of that deference, also, to wealth and rank, which is evident in too many quarters, must surely come under the condemnation of Jesus, our Lord. If the Master were to enter some church buildings for the Sunday morning service and take a seat in one of the pews, how manifest would be the hard, cold look upon the faces of its owners, which would invite Him, with a meaning louder than words, to take His departure.

Nowhere is this matter more clearly treated than in the Epistle of James: "My brethren, hold not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come into your synagogue a man with a gold ring, in fine clothing, and there come in also a poor man in vile clothing; and ye have regard to him that weareth the fine clothing, and say, Sit thou here in a good place; and ye say to the poor man, Stand thou there, or sit under my foot-stool; are ye not divided in yourselves, and become judges with evil thoughts?"

What also must be the mind of the Master regarding many of the various and often questionable methods resorted to for the raising of money for the church? When Christian people descend, in appealing for the financial support of the church, from the high motive of what it is doing for the training and developing and saving of the life of the community; and when they imply by their acts, that these no longer have an influence, but they must make of the church an eating house or an old curiosity shop in order to keep it alive, the need

of internal reforms is all too evident. Just in proportion as the spiritual vitality of a church decreases the number of its pay suppers and entertainments and bazaars increases.

I wonder often what the gentle and loving Jesus, in whose breast was kindled the intense fire of a holy indignation when He entered into the temple of God and saw the money changers and the tables of merchandise, what He would do if He were to witness many of the scenes which are enacted in our modern church life? Did the anger of Jesus ever rise to a greater height, than on the two occasions when He cleansed the temple? The Lordship of Jesus if practically applied in present day religious activities would doubtless often re-enact the scenes in the temple at Jerusalem; and still we can hear the Master repeat the words, "My house shall be called a house of prayer."

If the authority and spirit of Jesus were as dominant as it ought to be in every church, the factions and criticisms and jealousies that are so often glaringly evident would have to cease. Many stand in the pew and sing "All hail the power of Jesus' name, and crown Him Lord of all," and yet harbor a spirit of bitterness toward a brother or a sister member in the next seat. No church can be blessed as it ought to be if there are two members of that church who will not speak to each other.

Jesus is not Lord in the hearts of many of the rank and file in the membership of our churches. Otherwise there would not be such liberal criticism

of the preacher who dares to tell the truth and shame the devil. If he deals in glittering generalities and poetic fancies they are pleased. But when, like the Prophet Nathan of old, he tears off the mask of hypocrisy and strikes boldly at sin in places high and low, they cut down their subscriptions and try to force him to resign.

Is it any wonder that it is so hard to awaken a real religious revival in many communities when we understand the condition of the churches themselves. Perhaps it is here that the great principle of the divine Lordship must first be applied. There is needed a spiritual awakening intensive as well as extensive. Judgment must begin at the house of God.

It is in the church that the supremacy of Jesus ought to be most clearly seen. It is the church that ought by its actions to set an example of an implicit obedience to its divine Head. And whenever a church becomes apostate, not simply in its relationship to the world outside, but especially in the conduct of its own affairs, we must naturally expect that Jesus will say unto that people, as He did unto the church in Sardis, "I know thy works, that thou hast a name, that thou livest; and thou art dead."

It is well to read the second and third chapters of Revelation in the light of the Lordship of Christ. Those letters to the seven churches are not simply the messages of John, they are the revelation of Jesus; as it is declared in the first chapter,

"From Jesus Christ who is the faithful witness, the first born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth." Those churches of Asia have many a modern counterpart; and the messages of the Master are as relevant to-day as to the generation to which they were first addressed.

None of us can begin to fathom the intense love of Jesus for the church. The best that even Paul himself could do was to liken it to the love of a husband for his wife, of a bridegroom for his bride. In the fifth chapter of Ephesians this relationship of Christ to the church is plainly expressed, "Wives, be in subjection unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, being himself the saviour of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives also be to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself up for it; that he might sanctify it, having cleansed it by the washing of water with the word, that he might present the church to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

But the emphasis of this principle of Christ's Mastership, to the extent it deserves, might affect the pulpit also as well as the pew. No one who has had any intimate and extended acquaintance with the ministry of the various denominations would question the earnestness and heroism and sacrifice

of a large part of the preachers of the present day. God be praised for the grand men—of giant mind and ripest culture, many of them—who are content to labor in hard and obscure fields, impelled by the spirit of their beloved Leader. The stories of the martyrs of the first century can find a parallel in the lives of many faithful pastors who are pouring forth their hearts' blood in the service of their Master as truly as did the heroes of the past. Yet notwithstanding this, what means all the scramble for the larger salaries and churches by a host of candidates, if Jesus is in truth their Lord?

Could you imagine, furthermore, a sermon prepared and delivered under the guidance of Jesus, to treat simply of some subject separated from His gospel as far as the ends of the earth? If every preacher could see his acknowledged Lord sitting before him during the service, how greatly, often, the message would be changed! In the sovereignty of Christ the preacher finds a theme capable of the most varied and practical application. In it he finds an aid in producing that quickening of conscience and conviction of sin essential in any great revival. And more than this it is his own realization of this same great truth of Jesus as his personal Leader, to which amid the antagonism and indifference about him he must turn for his own direction and inspiration.

With the authority of Jesus recognized in every department of the church work, great results cannot fail to be evident to the entire community. In such

a church the members will be termed a peculiar people, and there will, of necessity, be an abundance of criticism and sneers. Such ministers also find their pathway sometimes strewn with thorns, and like their Master, they are often set at naught. But this is the promise of Jesus, "The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord." Also, "In the world ye have tribulations: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."

Let him who professes to follow Jesus as Lord first sit down and count the cost. It ought to mean far more, amidst the enlightenment of our age, than at any former period in history. But the practical and general application of this principle by pulpit and pew would mean such a wave of persecution sweeping over the churches of our land as has not been witnessed for centuries. Yet something of this kind, I fear, must come to separate the gold from the dross, so that the church, cleansed and purified, may go forth in our day under the direction of its divine Leader to do the work to which it has been called.

CHAPTER XIV

THE CHRISTIAN INCENTIVE

2 Corinthians 5:14, "For the love of Christ constraineth us."

In the preceding chapters we have been considering some of the results that would follow the proper emphasis and practical application of the Lordship of Jesus. We might now be led to ask how is this ideal to be made real? What influences can be set in operation to make this principle dominant in human affairs? Is it to be sufficient to convince the reason and consciences of men of its supreme importance? This is valuable as far as it goes. But is this potent enough to overcome the natural inertia of humanity that resists all change? We must go even deeper yet if we are to expect the authority of the will of Christ to get the firm hold it should upon the lives of men.

There is still a greater incentive to which we can appeal. It reaches the heart, the center of the being. It is the master motive that has intrinsic power when once enkindled, to bring all other motives in subjection to itself. It is the awakening of the Christian incentive, the personal affection and attachment of the personal soul for the personal Christ.

The true study of character is a study of motives. Human conduct is as much under the operation of cause and effect as is the growth of plants, or the action of electricity or gravity. If the water supply of a city were found to be impure, no one would think of trying to cleanse it at the individual faucets. They would seek the cause of pollution and apply the remedy at the central fountain. So any method to improve or transform human conduct must find its origin, not in correcting the acts, but in changing the motives that prompt men to do what they do and be what they are.

If a watch should be irregular in keeping time, no one would think that a new dial, or a more valuable chain, or a more finely engraved case, could remedy the defect. It is a shortsighted policy in our system of legislation that punishes the results of crime rather than the motives that cause the crime.

We are led to ask, What are the ruling incentives in human action? Many of them are, by their nature, degrading and destructive, such as the motives of anger, hatred, or revenge. In the character of Chillingworth, in the "Scarlet Letter," Hawthorne has described a life that labored incessantly for years, actuated by the motive of revenge. The spirit of rivalry, which was used by the Jesuit schools in the Middle Ages, was effective in promoting study; but it resulted also in inculcating a spirit of dissimulation and intrigue. It made the followers of Loyola among the shrewdest scholars of their day;

yet with their motto, "The end justifies the means," it nourished the baser instincts of character.

Our present business system of competition is based largely upon the incentive of rivalry. And while it is effective in stimulating effort, yet its tendency is to bring out the lower rather than the higher elements of life. Add to this the motive for gain, and you have a combination which is taxing the energies of the business world to their utmost.

Then there is also the incentive of fear, which is varied in its effects. In the childhood of the individual or the race it is especially potent and valuable. All law has this for its basis. Law is forceless without penalty, and penalty appeals only to fear. The premature elimination of this incentive from religion is doubtless one of the causes for the present spirit of indifference.

But there is a greater motive than all of these, the motive of love. Perfect love casteth out fear and every other controlling influence. The most potent forces for the molding of the life arise, not from the intellect, but from the emotions. It is not what a man knows, but what he likes, that largely shapes his conduct and his character. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." If the affections are centered upon an unworthy object, it means that the whole life is threatened with disaster. If set upon the physical they are apt to produce a glutton or a debauchee; if upon fashion and dress, the result is vanity; if upon wealth, they produce covetousness, if upon rank

and power, the result is tyranny or arrogance. As the love is high or low, the life will be ennobled or degraded.

The highest love must always center in a personality. Every great movement in the world, social, economic, political, or religious, has finally found its highest expression in a person. Therefore the religion of the Hebrews could hardly have become a world religion. It was essential that the Word become flesh and dwell among us. It is for this reason that Paul reveals the secret of vital Christianity, the master motive, which actuated the early Christians. Christ was to them all in all. Not simply their Adviser and Governor, but in Him they lived and moved and had their being. This is the supremacy of Lordship.

To many, even professed Christians, Jesus does not seem a living reality, but simply a historic personage who stepped forth on the stage of time and performed for a season a wonderful rôle and then vanished. They look back to Jesus as some one who has been, rather than up to Him as one who is, and forward to Him as one who ever will be. At least one of the great causes of the intense zeal of the Christians of the first century was the nearness to them of the personal Christ. The words of Jesus, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth," and "Lo, I am with you alway," were continually ringing in their ears. Their love for Him was a personal affection, hence they gradually came to look at life, as it were, out of His eyes, and

from His divine standpoint. Therefore, Paul could say, "The love of Christ constraineth us."

This thought includes the love of Christ for the Father. They began to know God as Jesus knew Him. They began to experience that personal relationship with Him, which is the basis of all true religion. Knowing Jesus, they knew the Father, and could go to Him for what they needed in perfect confidence and trust.

And also this love of Christ, which actuated them, was Christ's love for humanity. As Jesus looked forth upon the multitude, as sheep not having a shepherd, He had compassion upon them. Likewise His followers, controlled by His spirit, learned to love the unloving and the unlovely and the unlovable. This must be the basis of all true philanthropy. It is impossible to be really charitable without being Christian, just as it is to be really Christian without being charitable. I do not mean the charity that gives away something that you do not need, that does not imply sacrifice; but the charity, rather, that gives until it hurts, in which the giver gives himself with his gifts.

Experience has generally proved that the one you have done the most for is the quickest to criticize and grumble because you have not done more. Now when this happens there must be one of two results. If your life is actuated simply from a worldly motive, when you see your kindness unappreciated you will become discouraged and cease; and the tendency will be to become embittered and to swing to the

extreme of selfishness and hardness of heart. But if, on the other hand, you are actuated by the Christian incentive; if it is the love of Christ that is impelling you, just as with the Master Himself, you will be driven, as it were, into the wilderness, and closer to the heart of your heavenly Father. If you are conscious that you are pleasing to your King all the harsh criticisms of humanity will be powerless to disturb your peace of soul.

This word translated "constrain," which the apostle used to describe the magic potency of Jesus, literally means "to hold together." It has a root meaning of "restrain." In every life there is needed this controlling influence to check those elements of nature that would injure and debase. There are many people you meet that evidently have much ability, yet they seem to lack ballast, or a balance wheel. The love even of an earthly friend has often been the unseen power which has kept many a life from going astray.

A young man who had inherited from his father the alcohol appetite told me that when he was about to leave home his mother, with her hand upon his shoulder, gave as her parting admonition, "My son, if you love your mother, never touch a drop of liquor as long as you live." And said he, "Many a time I have been among wild and frivolous companions, and having been invited to take a drink, I have even lifted the glass almost to my lips, but I have seen floating before me the vision of that mother, who has gone to glory. And it has been

her influence that has given me the victory over temptation."

If such could be the power of an earthly love how much greater when the love of Christ controls the life. There is no one of us that can dispense with this greatest of incentives. When great temptations sweep with almost irresistible power across life's sea we need the Master's presence to check the fury of the storm.

Again, this word "constrain" has a meaning of unifying, or drawing together. Without a common master there can be no unity. It is the love of all His disciples centered upon the one great Object of affection that binds them in the bonds of brotherhood.

The birthday of Wellington is celebrated in England, of Bismarck in Germany, of Napoleon in France, of Peter the Great in Russia, and of Washington in America. But there is but one birthday that is celebrated throughout all christendom, the nativity of the Son of God.

And in the third place this word "constrain" means to intensify. Do you ask, How may the Lordship of Jesus become a reality in the fullest sense? I would reply again, Through that all-consuming passion of the personal love of the individual for his crucified and risen and ascended Lord. Well has it been said, that the best education is that which instills in the pupil a love for learning. It is love that lightens life's labors, that makes the hard things easy, that lubricates the joints and hinges

of our natures, and frees them from friction and wear. It is love that lifts toil out of the mire of mere drudgery and inspires us to be and do our best.

In the twenty-first chapter of Exodus, the law-giver is speaking of the relationship of master and servant. At the close of six years of service the servant shall go out free. "But if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: then the master shall bring him unto God, and shall bring him to the door or unto the door-post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him forever." Such service is the service of love.

Said Napoleon to his attendant at St. Helena, "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I, founded kingdoms on force, and they all have perished. Jesus Christ founded a kingdom upon love, which will endure the test of time, and is eternal."

Our Lord accepts no drafted soldiers, they must be volunteers. While the apostles were glad to term themselves the bond servants of Jesus, yet their service was far more loyal and faithful than it was possible for one actuated by low incentives. Jesus Himself had said, "No longer do I call you servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends."

The story is told of a beautiful young lady who was even more beautiful of character than of countenance. And her friends wondered why she so surpassed her associates in nobility of soul. But finally one day she intrusted to a friend the secret

of her life. She wore about her neck a locket, which was generally supposed to contain the face of some dead friend. In this moment of exceptional confidence she allowed her friend to open the locket. Within it were engraved these words, "Whom not having seen, I love." It was her love for her personal Master, that wielded the dominant influence in her life.

It is said that during the Egyptian campaign, before the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, Lord Wolseley had upon his staff a young naval officer who looked up to his commander as his ideal of military greatness. He loved his general with all the manly enthusiasm of a strong heart. One evening the general called this soldier to his tent and said, "Lieutenant, I am going to intrust into your hands the key to the success or the failure of to-morrow's battle. To-night by the light of the stars you are to guide the Highland brigade to their place in the line for the assault at daybreak. Lead them straight, sir, and as you charge up the hill to-morrow be sure that the field glass of the commander will be upon you."

The brave young fellow's heart beat high to think of the confidence reposed in him. He put himself in front of those hardy men, and then in silence led them around the enemy that night, till they came to the position which had been selected. And when the battle opened at daybreak the young officer took his place by the side of the colors as the column stormed the trenches of El Mahdi's forces encamped upon the hill. He was first to leap upon

the redoubt, and the first to fall, pierced by the bullets of the enemy. They bore him fatally wounded to his tent, and the news was carried to his commander. The general left his place on the field, for the victory was already won, and hastened to the tent of his brave young officer to give him a word of praise.

When he entered the tent the lieutenant's eyes were closed, but hearing the approaching footsteps, he opened his eyes and looked into the face of the commander-in-chief of the British army. At once a more than usual brightness lit his countenance, as he responded to the loving look of his general, and with his dying breath, triumphant, he exclaimed, "General, didn't I lead them straight?" The approval of his commander was the great incentive of his life. It more than overmastered every other motive.

How, then, can we establish this great principle of the Lordship of Jesus? It can be done only by awakening this greatest of passions, love. It must be the strongest type of love, affection for a person. It must be the highest expression of affection, devotion to the Prince Imperial of heaven. Love is contagious. Love knows no limits and defies all dangers.

Cromwell more than matched the intense enthusiasm of the Cavaliers by infusing his soldiers with an ardent zeal for the Lord of hosts. It was thus the Puritans triumphed at Naseby and Marston Moor. To meet and master the dominant desires of our

own age for pleasure and gain, demands a like incentive. The church has machinery enough and money enough, the lack is not in intellectual or in numerical strength. But Christians to-day need more of the fervor of the Ironsides and Crusaders. They need not only the consciousness of a great cause, but also that individual loyalty to their great Leader which inspired the martyrs of the early church.

We might ask Paul a question: "Paul, we never could understand why you were willing to turn your back upon friends and fortune, upon place and praise and wealth and ease, and go forth to strange lands to be stoned and starved and scourged? Paul, why was it that in the jail at Philippi, at midnight, you could pray and sing praises to God? Why was it that so near the close of your life, down in that dismal dungeon in Rome, in the very shadow of your approaching death, you could send forth such notes of victory and joy?" And then I imagine the face of the great apostle to the Gentiles, lighting up with a radiance almost more than human, as he exclaims, "It is the love of Christ that constraineth me."

Oh! that you and I may have that same great affection for our divine Lord! That, like Mary in the garden, we may grasp His feet, and utter the glad acclaim, "Rabboni," my Master! Let us be conscious of His abiding presence, and enter into the spirit of the prayer that we may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship

of His sufferings. Let us endeavor, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing unto Him. Let us love Him because He first loved us, and is living and reigning that He may bring all those who serve Him into the heavenly places in fellowship with Him forever.

CHAPTER XV

THE PREPARATION FOR CHRISTIAN SERVICE

Isaiah 6: 1-9, "In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above him stood the seraphim: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is Jehovah of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then, said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he touched my mouth with it, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven. And I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then I said, Here am I; send me."

In God's call to Isaiah we find the divine method of preparing a soul to do His will. It began with a revelation of Himself. This knowledge of God is

essential for all earnest and intelligent service. Jesus said that it was even eternal life itself. Our Lord must be real to us in order to be Lord indeed. To know Him is to love Him. And to love Him is to respond to His call to service with a glad and willing heart.

Little did the young prophet think, as he went up to that temple service, that it was the hour when a great transformation would take place in his life. It was there he was to get a fore-glimpse of the true Lord of hosts, the Lord who centuries after should come incarnate to the earth, to become the world's Redeemer and heaven's King. God grant that these pages may help some soul to get a similar vision of that same Lord, and by it, be brought to yield his life in full obedience to His will.

It is well for us to understand the conditions existing in Jerusalem at this time. The little kingdom of Judah was situated between the two great empires of Assyria and Egypt, which were battling for the world's supremacy. In Jerusalem there were three distinct parties, semi-religious and semi-political in their nature. The Assyrian party advocated an alliance with the strong empire on the north as the only means by which the little kingdom could successfully cope with the power of the Pharaohs. The Egyptian party, on the other hand, said, "No, let us form an alliance, offensive and defensive, with Egypt on the south; thus only, can we hope to contend effectively with the northern foe."

Then there was a third party, called the Jehovah

party, to which the young prophet, Isaiah, belonged, and of which, even before this time, he was probably a recognized leader. Tradition tells us that he was a youth of wealth and talent, that he belonged to the nobility, and, as some assert, that he was a nephew of the reigning king. Before he received this great vision the young prophet had doubtless been zealous in the cause of Jehovah, and would have resented the imputation that he was moved by any other incentive than the glory of God.

It is possible to use even the greatest calling simply as a means for the furtherance of selfish ambitions and ends. A man may be very zealous in a noble cause, and yet, in reality, be impelled by ignoble motives. Isaiah had seen other lords upon the throne. His ideal of greatness had probably been in harmony with the prevalent conception of his own and other generations; the ideal of an earthly monarch, seated on a throne, surrounded by all the riches and retinue of royalty, clothed in the finest apparel, ministered to by a host of servants, the object of the praise and honor of an entire country. Other lords had doubtless been deified in the ideals of the young prophet: the lord of wealth, of appetite, of intellect. But on this day as he entered the temple he saw the true Lord, the only Lord, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up. And such was the greatness of this vision that it crowded out all thoughts and conceptions of any rival, for the border of His garments extended even to the outer court.

There are many in the world who believe in Christ, who have in their hearts a profound admiration and love for His character, yet there are other things that are far pre-eminent in their thoughts and affections. Many believe that Jesus is the Son of God, but He is not the son of their god. Their god is ambition, or position, or pleasure, or riches. There comes a time now in the life of Isaiah when he sees the true Lord, high and lifted up. This time must come in every life, before the soul can be fitted for service.

Let us not despise the value of this vision, designating it as only a dream. For all the greatest characters of the Scriptures, in a sense, were dreamers: Abram, before he left his native land; Jacob, as he pillow'd his head on the stone at Bethel; Moses, while tending the flock among the foothills of Horeb; Samuel, as he lay in sleep; Ezekiel, in the land of the Chaldeans; Peter on the housetop; and Paul caught up into Paradise. And it was prophesied that one of the evidences of the pouring out of the Spirit of God upon all flesh would be, that the old men should dream dreams and the young men should see visions. It is essential that the divine Lordship shall be idealized before it can be realized. God must be present in the heart before He can be manifest in the action. His power must be felt in the soul before it can be evident in the speech.

The scene which Isaiah witnessed produced upon his mind a most profound impression. As he saw

the ranks of seraphim around and above the throne, and as the great chorus choir in the temple service responded to the voice of the officiating priest, he seemed to hear the angels chanting in antiphonal strains which resounded through the corridors of the temple: "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory." And as the smoke arose from the sacrifice on the altar, it seemed that his entire being was filled with the incense of the divine Spirit. Then he exclaimed, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of hosts."

This vision of the being of God is essential for awakening conviction of sin. It comes by contrast. The only adequate conception of God is through the personality of His Son. Jesus must be to us the highest ideal of divinity; beyond Him it is impossible for the finite mind to go. And it is the revelation of His greatness that reveals our poverty. Whenever a person proclaims his own sinlessness it is evidence of a limited conception of the character of Christ. The apostle bade us "Grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ." If we grew simply in the grace of our Lord it might be possible sometime to approach our ideal; but if there be the growth that God desires, we will grow also in the knowledge of our Lord.

It ought to mean far more to-day to be a Christian

than it ever meant before in the world's history. If we are not satisfied any longer to lumber along in an old stage coach, or to light our dwellings with the tallow-dip, but are ambitious for the limited express and the electric light, ought we not to expect the same advancement in our religious ideals?

At the close of one of our afternoon services, a lady said to me, "I am sorry that you ever came to this place for meetings." "Why?" I asked. "Well," said she, "before these services began I felt very well satisfied, but now I am utterly disgusted with myself." Said I, "Praise the Lord!" "Praise the Lord!" said she; "what do you want to praise the Lord for?" "Because you realize, as never before, your own spiritual needs. This realization of our own shortcomings is absolutely essential for any healthy growth and development in the Christian life."

It is just as if there lived in some rural community a youth who had considerable natural talent as an artist, and his rude crayon and charcoal sketches had been highly praised by his circle of friends. Finally the impulse seizes him to go to a large city and there to exhibit his pictures. He takes them to a great art gallery, and holds them up beside some famous paintings of the masters. He feels now utterly undone, in a sense discouraged. Yet in another sense he has never been so near to becoming a great artist.

So it is with the conception of the character of our divine Lord. It must inevitably bring a sense

of our own unworthiness and a stronger sensitivity to sin. The rising of the Sun of righteousness within the soul reveals as well as heals. By the radiance of His presence, faults and failures before unsuspected even by oneself now are brought clearly into view. Such a revelation is the parent of true humility. "For we are not bold to number or compare ourselves with certain of them that commend themselves: but they themselves measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves with themselves, are without understanding" (2 Cor. 10:12).

Just as the appearance of Jesus to Saul of Tarsus on the Damascus road brought conviction and conversion, so the vision of the Lord in the temple caused Isaiah to exclaim, "Woe is me! for I am undone." We must come to this point in our religious experiences before the Lord can use us. It is in weakness we are made strong. As Jonah said, "When my soul fainted within me, I remembered Jehovah." It has been well said that the greatest life in God's sight is the one that has the greatest appetite for spiritual things. This heart hunger can come only to the soul that appreciates his own insufficiency and need.

And let us note also that Isaiah confessed his sins. It is this realization and admission of our own undone condition, that is the secret of spiritual success. Peter, in his failure, realizing the wisdom and power of Jesus, fell down and exclaimed, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." Penitently,

also the publican prayed, "God, be thou merciful to me a sinner." Literally, he said "*the* sinner." His deep conviction made him feel he was the only sinner. No prayer ascends more speedily to the throne of grace, and gains more readily the ear of God, than the one that opens with a confession of unworthiness.

"Then flew one of the seraphim unto me, having a live coal in his hand which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: he touched my mouth with it and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin forgiven." It is well to mark the force of this adverb "then." Why was not the iniquity of Isaiah taken away long before? Because he had not realized its presence and his own desperate need. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins," and the cleansing of hands and heart is essential, before we can stand in His holy place.

Now, Isaiah is ready to hear the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us?" Doubtless, often before God had spoken to him, but his ears had been heavy with pride and selfish ambition, so he did not hear the call.

The incident is related of Jean Ingelow, that one evening some friends invited her to go out with them into the grove to listen to the song of the nightingales. She went, but she was disappointed and said, "I do not hear the birds." It seemed strange to her companions, for the music of the songsters to them was so distinct. But finally the

poet realized the trouble. Fearing the night air, before she started she had filled her ears with cotton.

So it was with the young prophet of Jerusalem. His heart had not been receptive to the divine influence. Now all this is changed, his ear becomes attentive to the Master's voice. And in response to the call to action he answers, "Here am I, send me."

Mark well the steps that brought Isaiah to this decision. They are the same steps that each of us must take in preparation for Christian service. He beheld the vision of his Lord; he saw in contrast his own unworthiness; then in penitence he confessed; forgiveness followed; his heart was now ready for the divine message, and also to obey. It was a great work God had for the young prophet to do. It was to be a hard and painful mission. He was to proclaim the Word of the Lord to a people that were to continue to reject his message, and thereby seal their own doom. But through his loyalty to his Master, he was to become an inspiration to the centuries, and finally to see Him face to face, whose fore-glimpse had wrought the transformation in his life.

In closing this chapter let me ask, How is it in your own life? Have you seen the true Lord high and lifted up, and has that vision taken hold upon your entire being? Have you gained the conception of true greatness? Of that kingliness of character that found expression in the humility and service and obedience of the Son of God? Has Jesus

become to you the Chief among the thousands? Has the greatness of His life and death, His resurrection and exaltation, made you feel your own unworthiness? Have you come to Him in humble confession, and looked to Him as your only source of help and inspiration and guidance? If you have, then you may be assured all barriers will be broken down that may have kept you from entering into a life of full surrender. Then you may be sure He will call you to go with Him into some field of service, humble and hard it may be, but no less valuable. God grant that you may hear the Master's voice as He says, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" And like Isaiah, may you answer, "Here am I, O Lord, send me."